WHICH? CAR 2001

The complete guide to buying a new or used car

RELIABLE MODELS

Our survey reveals which cars you can trust

OWNER SATISFACTION

Verdicts on more than 140 models

SAFETY

Which cars will protect you the best in a crash?

RUNNING COSTS

Picking the right car can save you thousands of pounds

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PRINTING
St Ives (Caerphilly) Ltd

PUBLISHED BY WHICH? LTD
the trading subsidiary of
Consumers' Association,
a registered charity,
2 Marylebone Road,
London NW1 4DF

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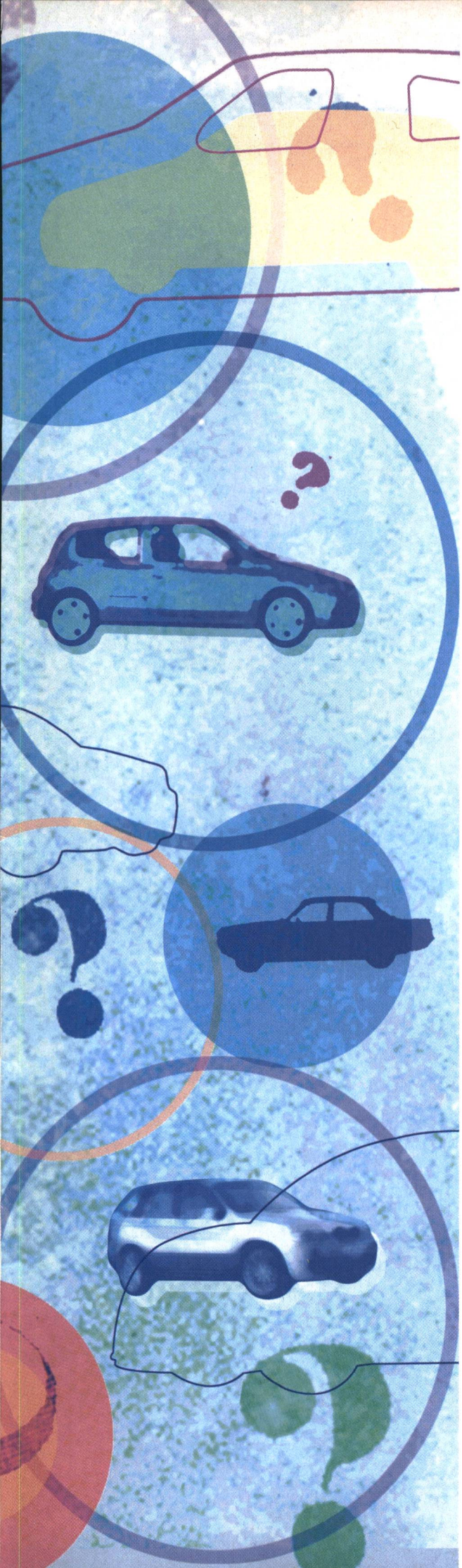

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Check whether your car – or a car you're planning to buy – has been recalled for vital safety work

The models we recommend

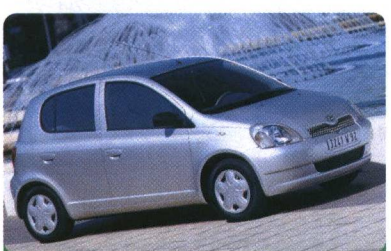
Whatever size of car you're looking for, it's well worth test driving some of the models that are listed here

We choose Best Buy models in seven classes of car, from superminis to executive cars. The class that the cars in *Which? Car 2001* fall into depends largely on their size, but also on the size of engines that they're available with, their price and their key competitors (according to the makers). Our seven groups are superminis, small cars, family cars, small multi-purpose vehicles (MPVs), MPVs, executives, and off-roaders.

To choose our Best Buys, we look at four aspects in particular. First and foremost we look at reliability. Our Best Buys mustn't have any below-average ratings for breakdowns, problems or faults (see 'Reliable impression', p15, for how we devise our ratings).

SUPERMINIS

Skoda Fabia


Toyota Yaris

BEST BUYS

Overall standards in this class have risen dramatically in recent years. Not so long ago, opting for a supermini meant doing without adequate crash protection – not to mention features, such as air conditioning and power steering. But now you can have it all and the best models will come as a real surprise if you think small means cheap and nasty.

Top of the tree this year are the **Skoda Fabia** and the **Toyota Yaris**. Both are highly rated by their owners and score well for safety and security. The Yaris is edging it for reliability.

WORTH CONSIDERING

The **Renault Clio** is a good performer, but is let down by its poor security. Also, owners criticise the high price of parts and servicing. We've demoted last year's Best Buy, the highly rated **VW Polo**, because its security is only average, and parts and servicing costs are high, too.

SMALL CARS

BEST BUYS

It's business as usual for the **Toyota Corolla** which hangs on to its Best Buy crown thanks, in particular, to its peerless reliability. Space in the back is tight, though. Top spot is shared this year with the reliable **Nissan Almera**, which boasts good security and has no significant drawbacks.

WORTH CONSIDERING

The pricey **Audi A3** is a good all-rounder and is now available with five doors. The **Ford Focus** is highly rated by its owners but long-term reliability is still an unknown. The latest **Honda Civic** is looking good for safety but it's too new for us to have information on reliability or owner satisfaction. However, Honda is one of the most reliable brands so it's almost certainly a good bet.

Another alternative is the evergreen, and highly rated, **VW Golf**. Its main drawbacks are poor security, and expensive parts and servicing.

Toyota Corolla

Nissan Almera

FAMILY CARS

Honda Accord

BEST BUYS

It's all change in the family car class with most of the leading manufacturers having launched, or about to launch, new models. Our first Best Buy, the **Honda Accord**, has been around a while, though. It does well for safety and security and is well liked by its owners, whose only serious criticism is its thirst for fuel.

The top end of the family class has traditionally been dominated by the German brands. But now this is being challenged by the **Lexus IS200**, which becomes a Best Buy. It's safe, secure and reliable, and owners have no criticisms.

WORTH CONSIDERING

The **Toyota Avensis** doesn't match the best in its class for safety, but is otherwise a good bet. The **BMW 3-series** does most things well and is one of the most secure cars you can buy. The launch of the new 3-door Compact version has made it more affordable, too. Newest models have been having problems with their cooling system, though.

The latest **Audi A4**, **Mercedes-Benz C-class** and **Volvo S60** are too new for us to have reliability and owner ratings, but all are looking good for safety and security. Of the three brands, Mercedes-Benz has the best reliability record.

The **Rover 75** is one of the most highly rated models in its class but, given Rover's past performance, there's still a question mark over its long-term reliability.

Second, we look at what owners think of their cars. We check which cars are well liked overall. Not that that means they're perfect – no car is – but you can look up any drawbacks in the 'Owners' verdicts' section of the car summaries.

Since Euro NCAP crash testing began in 1997, car safety has improved pretty quickly. However, some cars still offer much more protection than others in a crash. All our Best Buys are up with class standards for secondary safety (and many of them are class leaders).

Finally, we look at how well the cars deter a thief, since this is still a major weakness of many cars (for details, see 'Window shopping', p22).

EXECUTIVE CARS

BEST BUYS

At this level, the cars are pricey and the standards high, particularly in terms of performance and comfort. Heavier cars tend to be safer in a crash, too, so standards of safety are high.

Lots of cars in this class have suffered from reliability problems this year, so we can't recommend them. This has left the field clear for the **Mercedes-Benz E-class** to become our Best Buy. Its reliability record is only average, but it's highly rated by its owners and is safe and secure. Servicing and repair costs are high, though.

WORTH CONSIDERING

We don't have any reliability or owner satisfaction ratings for the **Volvo S80** yet, but it's worth considering for its class-leading secondary safety. It does well for security, too.

Volvos overall are poor for reliability, though the latest models are looking better.

Mercedes-Benz E-class

Volvo S80

SMALL MPVs/MPVs

Citroën Xsara Picasso

Toyota Picnic

WORTH CONSIDERING

Yet again, it's hard to find any MPVs or small MPVs to recommend wholeheartedly, as they all have significant drawbacks.

Owners are full of praise for the **Citroën Xsara Picasso** (a small MPV), but long-term reliability remains unknown. The six-seater **Toyota Picnic** (which has just been discontinued, though there may still be some in stock) is one of the best all-rounders. However, it has poor security.

If you want to stand out from the crowd, the **Chrysler PT Cruiser** could be the car for you. It does well for safety and security, but we don't have any reliability information yet. The ten owners we spoke to (see 'First look', p28) love the PT Cruiser. Chryslers overall are average for reliability.

OFF-ROADERS

WORTH CONSIDERING

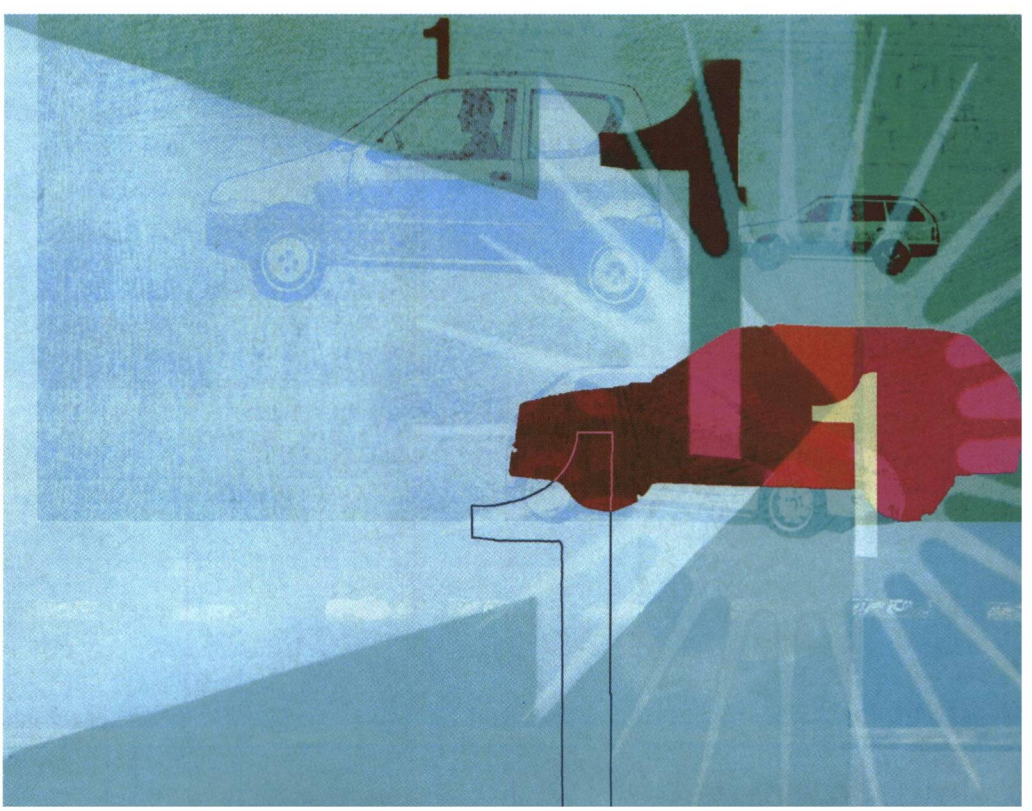
There's no overall Best Buy in the off-roader class as these cars are more often bought as a style statement than as a workhorse.

The **Honda CR-V** and **Subaru Forester** are designed to spend more time on the road than off it. In our survey, owners of both models gave glowing reports of their cars. We haven't assessed them for safety or security but the reliability of both models is looking good.

Not much is known about the secondary safety of off-roaders. They are big, heavy and usually tall vehicles, so will behave differently from normal cars in the event of a crash. We're planning to crash test a group of off-roaders with Euro NCAP next year, which will provide some much needed information.

Honda CR-V

Subaru Forester



Buying a new car

You can now buy a car from a wider range of sources than ever before. Whether you want to do the deal in the flesh or over the internet, we help you to weigh up the options

Private individuals are expected to buy well over half a million new cars this year. With thousands of pounds at stake, where can you find the lowest prices, and what are the potential pitfalls? We've listed the pros and cons of all the main ways to buy a new car, whether you want to import one from Europe or stick with a dealer.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

You'll probably want to test-drive the cars on your shortlist, and this should be easy to arrange through local dealers. There are contact numbers and web addresses for the major manufacturers on p66. Use these to get brochures and to find dealers.

Make sure you test-drive a model with the same engine size and similar equipment to the one you're thinking about. Whatever a dealer tells you, a smaller engine or a more basic interior can make a car feel quite different.

If you've gone to the trouble of taking a test-drive, the dealer's going to think you're a serious buyer. With increasing competition, they may well offer you a competitive price. But make it clear that you're in the process of shopping around.

WHERE TO BUY

You shouldn't normally have to pay the full list price – the recommended retail price set by the manufacturer. The exceptions to this are for rare or new models that are in short supply.

Generally, paying a dealer the list price is the most expensive option, and importing a car yourself from a dealer abroad is the cheapest. Other options – import agents, brokers and car supermarkets – fall in between.

If you're not absolutely wedded to the idea of a brand new car, a pre-registered one is a good choice. Many dealers sell them, and some may even specialise in them. Although not technically brand new, they've barely been driven. They're much cheaper so you can avoid some of the heavy initial depreciation of a new car. For example, as we went to press, a car supermarket was advertising a Ford Focus 1.6 LX 5-door registered three weeks earlier, and with a recorded mileage of five miles, for £10,299. The basic list price for this car is £12,315, so you'd save 16 per cent.

UK DEALERS

The Competition Commission has recommended that dealers should now be setting their own prices after negotiating bulk-buy discounts with the manufacturers. On average, dealer prices have dropped by around 6 per cent over the past 12 months, but don't let this stop you from collecting competing quotes and haggling.
It's best to treat extras, such as free equipment, servicing and cashback, separately from discounts – get the best price first.

PROS

- You can test-drive and see what you're getting.
- If the car's in stock, you can drive it away.
- With most makes, you'll get a three-year warranty.
- You can trade in your old car (though you should get more by selling it privately).
- You don't need to make much effort and you may feel it's the least risky option.

CONS

- Highest prices, even taking into account the recent reductions.
- The basic price of the car can be confused by the cost of extras.

PERSONAL IMPORTS

Importing from Europe is a tried and tested method, and there's plenty of information on how to do it.

It's not always easy to persuade a Continental dealer to sell you a right-hand-drive car, despite an EU law that prevents car manufacturers from restricting their dealers' freedom. Once you've found the right dealer and the right car, it's all down to paperwork. Get everything in writing, from the full vehicle specification, to delivery dates and financial terms. Pay

the deposit with a credit card for added protection.

PROS

- The biggest savings (up to 40 per cent off UK list prices).

CONS

- It can take a lot of time and effort, and you'll have to collect the car from overseas.
- Delivery times can be long.
- Currency fluctuations can affect the price.
- Different specifications for non-UK cars can make comparing prices tricky.
- For some makes, the warranty might be shorter than that offered in the UK.
- Large deposits (up to 50 per cent) are common, and there are limited finance options.
- Possible language difficulties.

IMPORT AGENTS

Many companies will take the hassle out of importing a car by doing it for you. Internet-based importers, that deal with everything from quote to delivery, have sprung up over the last year. Some well-known names, like Direct Line and Virgin, have also got involved. See 'Contacts', p66, for import firms.

PROS

- Big savings.
- No haggling with car sales assistants.

CONS

- If dealing with an internet-based company, you have to check that it's bona fide and won't disappear with your money.
- Delivery times can be long.
- Deposits are usually large, and you may have to pay for the service.

BROKERS

Car brokers act as intermediaries between private buyers and dealers. They buy in bulk (making big savings in the process), then sell the cars at a discount. Most supply UK-market cars, but some will import from Europe.

PROS

- Good prices with no haggling (around 10 to 15 per cent off list prices).
- In most cases, cars have UK specification, so it's easy to compare prices with dealers' quotes.
- Can be short delivery times.

CONS

- You might have to travel some way across the UK to collect your car.
- As with import agents, you need to check that the broker is genuine.

CAR SUPERMARKETS

These buy stock that manufacturers can't shift. The cars may be brand new or pre-registered with very low mileages. Supermarkets may also sell newly imported cars with delivery mileage, or a range of nearly new cars, such as ex-rental models.

PROS

- Big savings (about 10 to 30 per cent off list prices).
- You can inspect and test-drive cars.
- The cars are available immediately.

CONS

- Choice is limited to what's in stock.
- You may have to travel around the UK to find the car you want.

SINGLE MARKET FOR CARS?

The Competition Commission's 1999 report may have been a watershed for UK car prices. It concluded that UK consumers pay 10 to 12 per cent more, on average, than car buyers in the rest of Europe. We've been campaigning for lower prices for well over a decade.

The government accepted the Commission's findings, and has taken steps to curb the power of the manufacturers. But the fight isn't over yet – UK prices are still too high, despite the fall over the last 12 months.

The special arrangement underpinning the rip-off, called the block exemption, is in the process of being reviewed. At present, car manufacturers can control who sells their cars, where they can sell them and how many they can sell. This means that the car makers aren't bound by the rules of the EU single market, and this has prevented fair competition across the industry. It's up to the European Commission to reform the current set-up, and it's currently in the process of deciding what could replace it.

The original arguments for the car makers' special treatment assumed that cars were special and complex products that need a network of franchised dealers to service and repair them. We disagree, and believe that cars should be treated much like any other product.

Any system that replaces the current block exemption must allow car retailers to choose how they sell cars and be able to sell whichever cars they think consumers want to buy. Retailers should also be free to decide whether or not they offer repair and service facilities. Independent repairers should have fair access to the technical information and spare parts they need, and be able to choose and use parts from third party suppliers.

We've submitted our proposals to the EC, and look forward to a new system that doesn't abuse the consumers' rights.

Payment options

There hasn't been much change in the finance deals over the past 12 months, but changes to the car market could affect how you choose to pay for your car

Very few of us are in the fortunate position to be able to buy a car with cash. This means we're at the mercy of banks and car dealers to offer us finance. Some options are fairly difficult to understand, and uncertainty in the prices of used cars could further complicate certain sorts of deal. To help you make the right choice, we've explained all the popular ways to finance a car.

USING CASH

Paying with cash is straightforward and it increases your bargaining power. It won't necessarily be the cheapest option, though: you may be offered an interest-free credit deal. After putting down a deposit, your remaining funds can be kept in a savings account, earning interest until they are needed. Most interest-free deals have a fixed payment date for the balance. If you fail to settle on time, the penalty charges can be considerable. Read the small print and make sure you can settle on time.

BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY FINANCE

Approaching a bank is a good option if you don't have a deposit. There's a lot of competition for your custom, so shop around for the best package.

Unsecured personal loan

A personal loan involves borrowing the amount you need and paying for the car outright. Your monthly payments cover the loan plus interest, and the loan period is fixed at the outset.

Credit card

You can use a credit card if your credit limit is high enough. Many card suppliers have special offers (usually for the first six months) that can work out cheaper than a personal loan. But check what the rate will be when the initial period ends – it will usually be far higher than that of a bank loan.

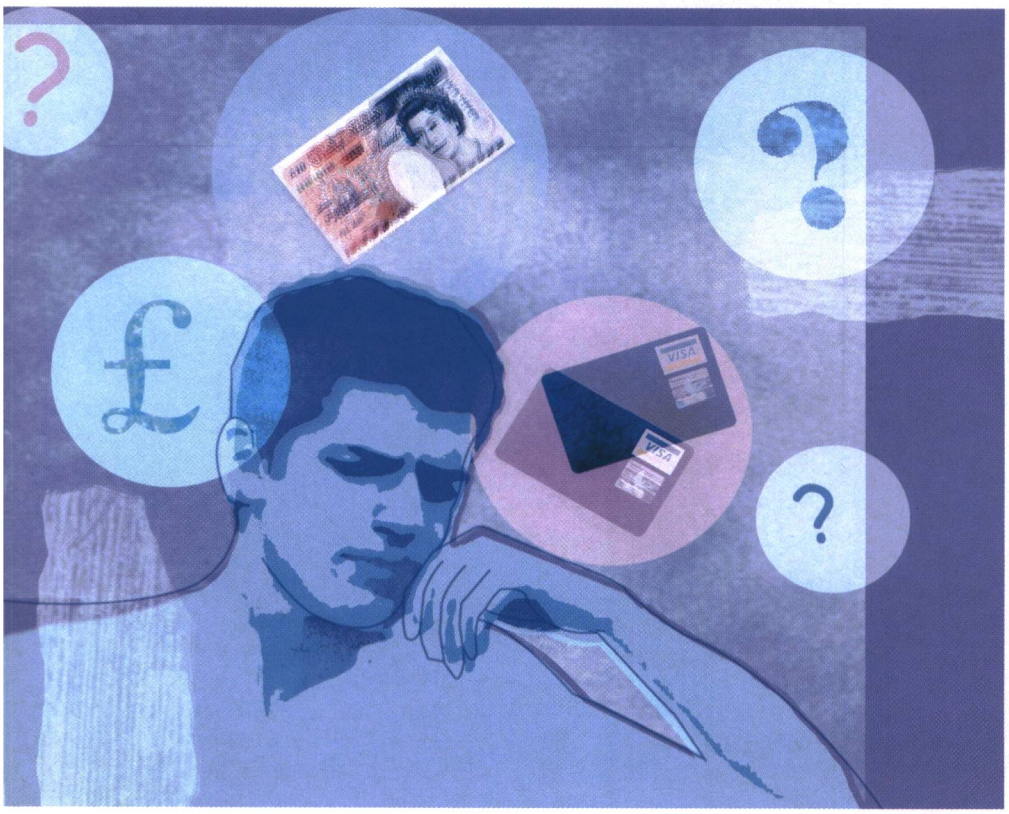
Car purchase loan

This is similar to an unsecured personal loan, but it takes into account that a car has a residual value throughout the loan period. This means you can benefit from lower instalments during the loan period, and defer a large chunk of the loan (perhaps 30 per cent) until the end. To finish the loan you have three options: pay the balance and keep the car; sell the car and pay the balance with the proceeds; or take out a second loan to pay the balance. Whichever option you choose, you'll be charged interest on the whole amount borrowed.

DEALER FINANCE

You expect showroom staff to openly persuade you to buy a new car. But finance deals and payment protection insurance might be peddled less overtly. Portrayed as providing ease and security of purchase, their principal purpose is to make the dealer money.

When you go shopping for a car, you may get polished spin from dealers about 'carefully tailored packages',



claimed to be 'most suitable' and 'hassle free'. Whether or not this is true, they'll do all they can to get you to sign the deal. They don't have to live with the consequences – you do. So make sure you understand your obligations before signing.

Dealer options usually carry fixed 'arrangement' and 'closure' fees. Arrangement can cost £70 to £100, and closure can typically cost £30.

Hire purchase (HP)

HP requires a deposit, then you pay the remainder plus interest in instalments over the agreed period. Importantly, the hire purchase company owns the car until the final payment. This means you can't sell it until the end of the deal.

Personal contract purchase (PCP)

Perhaps the most confusing of all the options, PCP deals are similar to HP in that you pay a deposit and you don't own the car until final settlement. However, they are also like car purchase loans because you can defer a proportion of the loan until the end of the contract, so reducing monthly payments. As with a loan, you pay interest on the whole amount.

When the loan begins, you're offered a 'minimum guaranteed future value' (MGFV) for your car, subject to agreed mileage limits and to the car being in 'good condition' (which is defined by the finance company). This is equal to at least the deferred lump sum.

There are three ways to end the deal:

- pay the deferred amount and keep the car. This might be necessary anyway, if you don't keep to the mileage and condition terms
- if you don't want to keep the car, check the terms of your agreement before you try to sell it privately for more than the MGFV. Then pay the balance and end the deal. A surplus could go towards your next purchase
- if you're unsuccessful selling the car, you can hand it back to the dealer as the final payment as long as you meet the mileage and vehicle condition terms. A word of warning – what constitutes normal 'wear and tear' for a used vehicle is subjective, so you may end up having a dispute with the loan company.

The main problem with a PCP is that you're dependent on the MGFV being a realistic valuation perhaps three years before ending the deal. For this type of scheme to be useful, the MGFV must be high enough to ensure a decent reduction in monthly payments throughout the loan, but low enough to allow you to sell the car with a surplus.

UK new car prices have fallen over the past 12 months. Second-hand prices are holding up well, but how long will it be before these follow suit? This recent new-car trend places doubt on the future used-car market, and must make it more difficult to predict accurate MGFVs. Not withstanding a slump in second-hand values, PCP deals work best with cars that traditionally retain high residual values – BMW, Land Rover and Volvo, for example.

Leasing purchase

This scheme also requires a deposit and has a deferred lump sum payment. However, unlike a PCP, there's no fixed valuation guarantee on the car, so you carry the risk that the car's value at the end of the loan may not equal what you owe.

Personal leasing

Although lease schemes are mainly aimed at business users, some are offered to private drivers. You never actually own the car, but make fixed monthly payments to use it. The payment often covers all running costs except fuel. This type of scheme is helpful for managing your budget because you know your monthly payments in advance.

As with other 'return' schemes, look at the return conditions. Make sure you won't have to make insurance claims to repair 'wear and tear' body damage before handing back the car.

PAYMENT INSURANCE

When taking out any finance deal, you'll probably be offered payment protection insurance. It's relatively expensive and policies have complex terms and conditions. Always read the small print to check that the policy covers you for the particular circumstances you want. Also, it's worth bearing in mind that you can buy a payment protection policy independent of the car purchase deal, so shop around.

Payment protection that's sold as part of a finance deal may be charged within the monthly car repayment, so you'll be charged interest on it.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

If you wish to end your agreement early, you may be penalised. For normal bank loans, settlement may include the lump sum, interest to date and an administration fee. However, for other types of deal, there may be more severe penalties, so read the small print carefully to find out the implications.

FINANCE CHECK LIST

- Look closely at your predicted budget, then consider which payment option suits you best.
- Decide which payment method you want to use before going near a showroom – a clever sales assistant may convince you to sign up to theirs.
- If you've got cash, ask about discounts. Find out whether there's an interest-free deal, and, if so, compare it with paying cash.
- Shop around for personal finance. Check the annual percentage rate (APR), which gives a comparative cost of the loan per year. Remember, a lower APR over a longer loan period may mean you pay more overall.
- A finance option is just another product that dealers want to sell for profit. Check that it matches your needs, and that you can afford it, and shop around
- Look at the vehicle return conditions carefully. These may cause problems when you come to settle the agreement.
- Ask for a written quote and a copy of the agreement before you commit. Take it away and study it carefully (including the small print) before you sign. If the dealer won't supply details, walk away.
- If you're offered payment protection insurance, you could be wasting your money. Consider whether you need cover and exactly what you want insured. You can get this type of insurance independent of a finance deal, so shop around for a good value policy that meets your needs.

What's your budget?

Most people set their budget first, then decide which models they can afford. To get you started, here's a list of some new and used options at a range of price points

We've picked out mostly cheaper models with smaller engines and low trim levels. If you're willing to pay a bit more, you can choose more powerful and upmarket versions of the models listed at each price point. For the second-hand options, we've assumed the cars are bought from a dealer, and are three years old with average mileage and in good condition. You should be able to beat these prices by buying privately. For new cars we've given dealer prices before discounts.

This isn't an exhaustive list, but it may suggest some new alternatives.

£4,000

SECOND-HAND You've got only used cars to choose from at this level – the £4,500 Perodua Nippa EX is the UK's cheapest car. And most nearly-new options start at around £5,000.

However, there's a wide choice of three-year-old superminis available, including some we've recommended in the past, such as the Nissan Micra and Toyota Starlet. You may find a wider choice of Ford Fiestas and Kas, because they sold in higher numbers. Other options include the Citroën Saxo, Daewoo Matiz, Fiat Punto, Rover 100, and the Swift and Wagon R+ from Suzuki.

Moving up a class, you'll find only budget small family cars such as the Hyundai Accent, Proton Persona and Skoda Felicia.

If you want a larger car, such as a Ford Mondeo or Renault Laguna, for as little as £4,000, you'll have to go for one up to five years old, or one with high mileage.

£6,000

NEW There are a few superminis available as base models for around £6,000, including the Citroën Saxo, Daewoo Matiz, Daihatsu Cuore, Fiat Seicento, and Suzuki Alto. You'll also find a choice of previously registered cars at some dealers.

SECOND-HAND Many more nearly new superminis are available, including the bigger-engined versions of the Citroën Saxo, Ford Fiesta and Ka, Peugeot 106, Vauxhall Corsa and VW Polo. Or you may just be able to afford one of the cheaper small family cars, such as the Citroën Xsara, Daewoo Lanos, Hyundai Accent or the last of the Skoda Felicias.

Good reliability and owner satisfaction make the Nissan Primera a fine second-hand choice

There are lots of three-year-old large family cars to choose from that cost around £6,000, including the Citroën Xantia, Fiat Marea, Ford Mondeo, Hyundai Lantra, Nissan Primera, Peugeot 406, Rover 600, Skoda Octavia and Vauxhall Vectra.

£8,000

NEW Any of the superminis are available at this price, though you may have to choose a 1.0-litre version of the more expensive models, such as the Nissan Micra, Toyota Yaris and VW Polo.

There are one or two small family cars available new (if you're happy with a 1.4-litre engine) such as the Daewoo Lanos and Rover 25. Diesel becomes an option, too, in small cars like the Fiat Punto, Ford Fiesta, Peugeot 106 and Skoda Fabia.

SECOND-HAND With three-year-old cars, you have a wide choice, including the latest Mazda 323, 1.6-litre VW Passat, Honda Civic and Accord, and VW Golf. Family cars within reach include some Ford Scorpios and Vauxhall Omegas. You may be able to find an MPV such as the Mitsubishi Space Wagon, or a Nissan Serena, or the cheapest of the seven-seater MPVs, the Fiat Ulysse.

£8,000 should also buy you a three-year-old coupé such as a 1.4-litre Ford Puma or Vauxhall Tigra. The only off-roader at this price would be an older version of the Vauxhall Frontera.

£10,000

NEW Although some of the most luxurious or sportiest superminis are beyond the £10,000 threshold, there are lots of well specified models to choose from, including the new Mini One from BMW.

Most base models of the small car class, with a 1.2-litre to 1.5-litre engine, fall into this price bracket. Choices include the Citroën Xsara, Fiat Brava/Bravo, Ford Focus, Mazda 323, Nissan Almera, Renault Mégane, and VW Golf.

Very few new family cars cost as little as £10,000. However, three possible choices include the Daewoo Nubira, Hyundai Lantra and the 1.4-litre Skoda Octavia.

SECOND-HAND Looking at cars up to three years old, where they may have lost 50 per cent or more of their original value, you can break into the prestige market. A 1.8-litre Volvo S40 saloon or V40 estate, or a 2.0-litre Saab 9-3 should be within reach. You could buy Italian flair and distinctive looks with a 2.0-litre Alfa Romeo 156, or German solidity with a 1.6-litre Audi A3 or BMW 316i compact. The Land Rover Freelander also starts at around £10,000.

The first of the facelifted Mazda MX-5s will cost about the same for its 1.6-litre version. Seven-seater MPVs include the Peugeot 806 and the slightly cheaper Citroën Synergie.

£12,000

NEW The Vauxhall Astra, Honda Civic and Rover 45 are possibilities with 1.4-litre and 1.6-litre engines, and you can also get some 1.8-litre Peugeot 306s. The cheapest Fiesta-based Ford Puma coupé costs just over £12,000.

If you want to go up a class, family cars with models around this price point include the Daewoo Leganza, Fiat Marea, Mitsubishi Carisma and Nissan Primera.

The Suzuki Vitara range of off-roaders starts at around £12,000, as do the five-seat Citroën Xsara Picasso and Renault Scénic small MPVs. Another choice is the six-seat Fiat Multipla.

SECOND-HAND Three-year-old family cars that are within the £12,000 budget include the Audi A4, Mercedes-Benz C-class and Volvo S70 saloon or V70 estate.

Off-roaders include the Honda CR-V, Isuzu Trooper, Jeep Cherokee and Land Rover Discovery. For off-road 4X4 ability in an estate-like bodystyle, you may be able to find a 1998 Subaru Forester.

At this price, you could afford various three-year-old models of the Ford Galaxy, VW Sharan, and Seat Alhambra – MPVs that are essentially the same car.

Other options in this class include the Toyota Previa and Honda Shuttle.

£14,000

NEW Many manufacturers' ranges of family cars start at around this price point, including the Alfa Romeo 156, Citroën C5, Ford Mondeo, Honda Accord, Mazda 626, Peugeot 406, Renault Laguna, Toyota Avensis, Vauxhall Vectra and VW Passat. Alternatively, you can choose from up-market smaller cars, such as the Audi A3, Mercedes-Benz A-class and VW Bora.

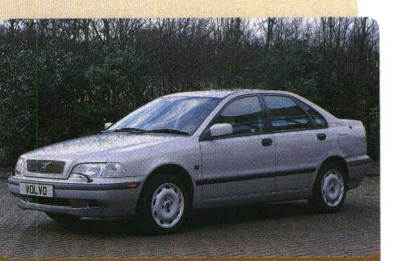
The Toyota RAV4 off-roader starts at under £14,000, as does Vauxhall's Zafira, a compact seven-seater MPV.

The only grumble that owners have about their new Honda Accord is the poor fuel consumption

SECOND-HAND Several three-year-old BMW 3-series models cost £14,000 or less, as do some Audi A6s, and Saab 9-5s. You can also choose a four-wheel-drive Subaru Impreza 2.0 turbo.

The cavernous Chrysler Voyager is available, with a 2.0-litre engine.

£16,000



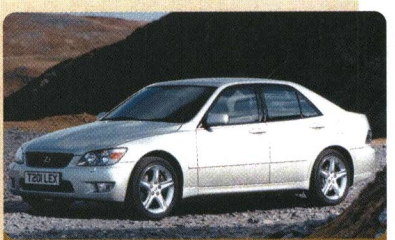
The Volvo S40 should give you good protection in a crash, but its security is lagging behind

NEW This marks the start of the Rover 75 and Saab 9-3 ranges, although you'd have to be content with the cheaper models. You can also choose a 1.6-litre or 1.8-litre Volvo S40 saloon, the V40 estate or a bigger-engined Mercedes-Benz A-class model, including the diesel versions.

If you fancy four-wheel-drive, you'll find plenty of choice for £16,000 – models available include the Honda CR-V, Land Rover Freelander and Subaru Forester. Affordable MPVs include the eight-seater Nissan Serena and the car-like Toyota Picnic. Sports cars for this kind of price include the Mazda MX-5 and the 1.6- litre MGF.

SECOND-HAND Advanced and luxurious three-year-old choices include the BMW 520, Mercedes-Benz E200 and 3.0-litre Saab 9-5. A Jeep Grand Cherokee costs much the same.

£18,000



Owners wax lyrical about the Lexus IS200 – and it's very reliable too

NEW Many MPVs, such as the Citroën Synergie, Ford Galaxy, Peugeot 806 and VW Sharan, start at this price point. The Kia Sedona is a well specified 2.5-litre V6 MPV at £17,000. You could also afford the cheapest in the Chrysler Voyager range, the Vauxhall Omega, and smaller prestige cars, including the Audi A4, BMW 3-series and Lexus IS200.

Top-of-the-range versions of family cars, like VW's 2.3-litre Bora with a V5 engine, or Peugeot's V6 3.0-litre 406 GTX, are available. The cheapest of the 4.0-litre Jeep Cherokees has a list price of around £19,000, and the short wheelbase Isuzu Trooper starts at £18,000.

SECOND-HAND A 2.8-litre Audi A6 or A8, BMW 523, Lexus GS300, Mercedes C240, or a top-of-the-range Volvo V70 could be yours. For something more sporty, you can afford a 1.9-litre BMW Z3 or Lotus Elise 1.8 convertible.

AROUND £21,000

NEW Choices here are between exotic versions of family cars, such as the Audi A3 1.8T Quattro Sport, Subaru Impreza 2.0 WRX and the VW Golf V6 4motion, which are all equipped with four-wheel drive, or a Mercedes-Benz C-class coupé. Many executive cars are available too, though you may need to negotiate a discount. Choices include the Audi A6, BMW 5-series, Jaguar X-type, Mercedes-Benz E-class, Nissan QX, Saab 9-5 and Volvo S70 saloon or V70 estate. The Land Rover Discovery turbo diesel range starts at £21,800, or you could run to one of the traditional Defender range.

SECOND-HAND There are several powerful and luxurious three-year-old options at this price, including the Jaguar XJ8 4.0, Land Rover Range Rover 4.0 SE, Lexus GS300 3.0 SE and Mercedes-Benz E320.

The 4-litre Jaguar XJ8 will turn heads, but we found that they are prone to breaking down

Buying a used car

You can get a lot more car for your money if you buy used, but there could be some risks. We guide you through the options

The price of new cars and their heavy initial depreciation may be enough to deter some buyers. But the improvements in reliability and rust resistance of recent cars, plus a wider range of outlets to choose from, makes buying second-hand ever more attractive. You get to own a car you couldn't otherwise afford, and feel comforted in the knowledge that you're doing it on the cheap.

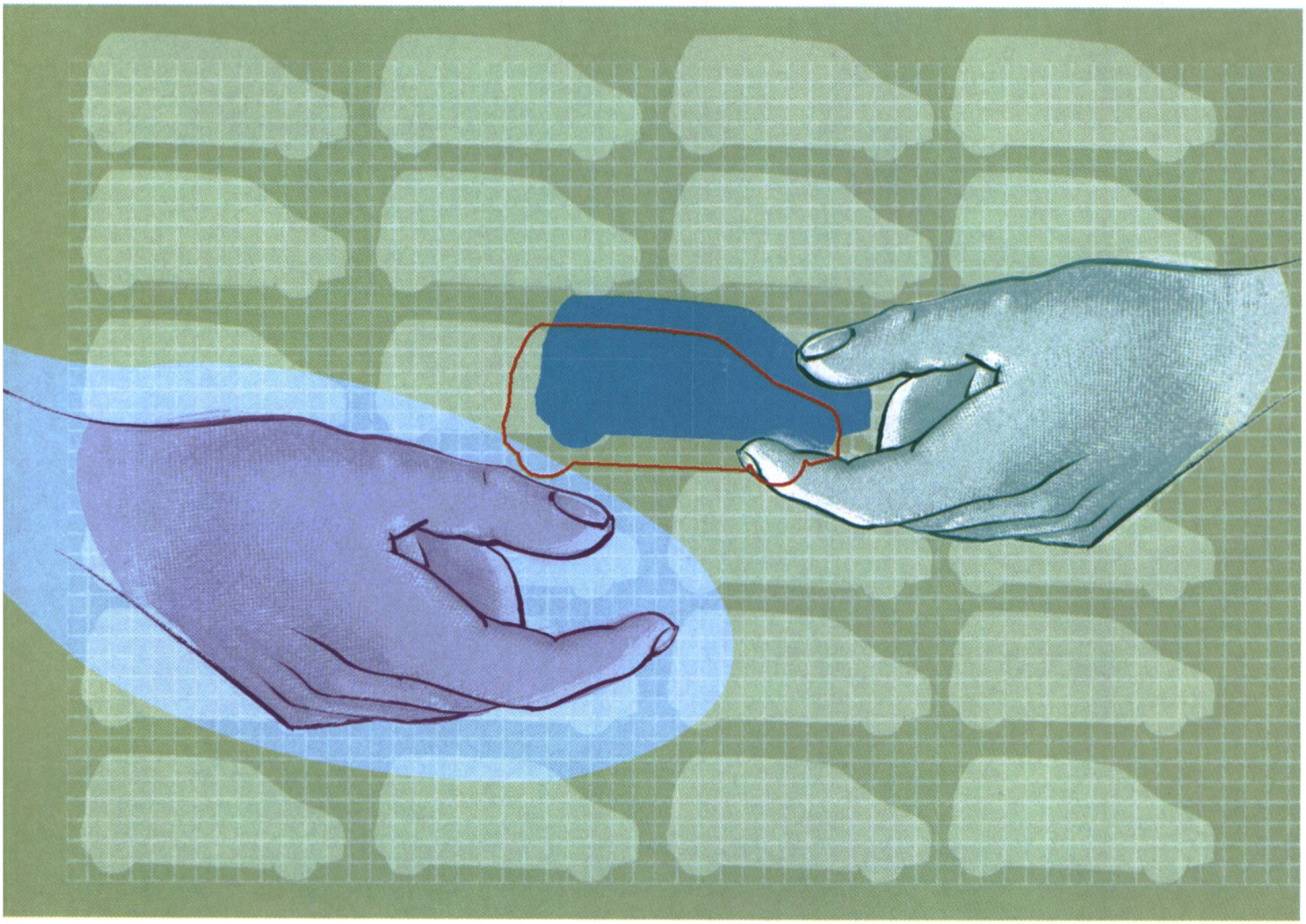
Surprisingly, given the record sales of new cars this year and the subsequent availability of trade-ins, used-car prices have been fairly resilient. And many new cars are cheaper this year than last, which should have a knock-on effect on the used market. However, with depreciation in the first three years of a car's life typically running at about 60 per cent (making a £15,000 car worth £6,000), the financial arguments for buying used remain strong.

THE BUYING OPTIONS

The internet in particular has increased access to information on the used-car marketplace. But when it comes down to doing a deal, there are still three main sources of cars – each with particular pros and cons.

Dealer

While dealers are probably the most expensive option, they're not all the



same. They range from franchised dealers, selling only fairly new, low-mileage, manufacturer-warranted cars, to small independent car lots selling a range of cheaper vehicles from various manufacturers. Then there are car supermarkets, which treat the car as a commodity, and often have 1,000 or more cars on display. You can usually search the stock of any of these types of dealer via a website. And there are other websites that act as searchable databases for groups of dealers across the country.

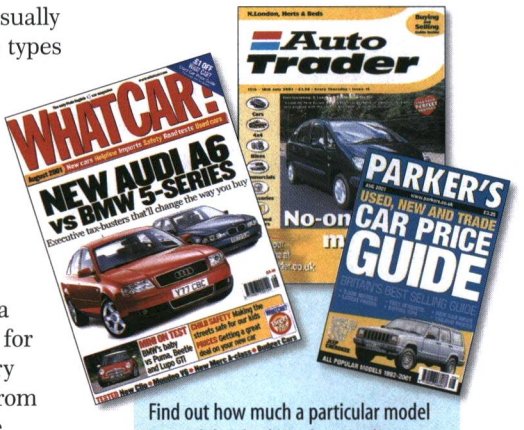
Whatever the size of dealership, you'll have stronger legal rights if you buy this way. The law says that a car sold by a dealer must be as described, fit for its purpose and be of satisfactory quality. If you buy a faulty car from a dealer, or it doesn't match the description in an advertisement, you should be able to get your money back or compensation to fix the problem (though you must act quickly).

Used cars may also come with a warranty. But, except on a nearly-new car that still has the remainder of a manufacturer's warranty, these are normally just mechanical breakdown insurance policies, which cover your car only for certain problems and parts – many have long lists of exclusions. Remember, though, whatever the warranty conditions, they can't override your legal rights.

Private seller

It's usually cheaper to buy privately than from a dealer, but you have fewer legal rights. If a seller lies about the condition of the car – for example, by claiming that it's in 'showroom condition', and then you find fault with it – your only option is to sue them which can be complicated and risky. So try to avoid the cowboys in the first place. When scanning ads, look for recurring phone numbers, or ads with only a mobile phone number. And when you phone about the car, be wary of sellers who try to avoid showing it to you at their home. These are some of the tricks small-time dealers use when masquerading as private sellers.

Classified small ads are the usual place to find sellers. Probably most used are the weeklies, such as *Auto Trader*, *Exchange & Mart* and *Loot*. Each of these also has a website, which not only may have more up-to-date listings, but can also be easier to search through if you're after something specific. Don't forget to check your local newspapers, too. See 'Contacts', p66, for a list of used-car classified websites.



Find out how much a particular model is worth by checking the price lists in magazines such as *What Car?* and *Parker's Car Price Guide*. For a good idea of what's around, look at *Auto Trader*

Auction

Buying at auction is the riskiest option, but it's the place for real bargains if you know what you're doing. You won't get a chance to road-test or check the car thoroughly before you buy, though it's worth watching it being driven into the auction hall. You buy 'as seen' and you have very limited time – usually just an hour – to reject a car.

Try to find an auction house that belongs to the Society of Motor Auctions (see 'Contacts', p66). Its Code of Practice and Arbitration and Conciliation Service offers some protection if a car turns out to be a real lemon. To find a local auction, look in a telephone listings book under 'Car auctioneers' or contact the Society of Motor Auctions.

If you're new to auctions, watch a few first to see how they work. When you're ready to start bidding, decide a maximum price you can afford and don't go beyond it.

HOW MUCH TO PAY

There are plenty of sources of information about used-car prices. Motoring magazines such as *What Car?* and *Top Gear* have some second-hand values. But there are also specialist magazines such as *Parker's Car Price Guide*, which have much more comprehensive price and specification information for a wide range of models. They have online versions, too (see 'Contacts' for their addresses).

Bear in mind that you have a better chance of finding a good range of cars to choose from if you're reasonably flexible about what you want. For example, it's easier to find a choice of two- or three-year-old Ford Mondeo or Peugeot 406 estates than a 1998 R-reg automatic Subaru Legacy 2.2 GX Auto in black. And if you're prepared to travel to view a car, that will help too.

CHECK OUT THE CAR

Your main problem with buying second-hand is, of course, making sure it's in good condition. As more and more new cars come with a three-year warranty, don't forget that if you're buying a car that's less than three years old, it's worth checking whether any faults can be fixed under warranty before you buy.

If you're buying from a dealer or auction, look for cars which have had a professional inspection and ask to look at the inspector's report.

If you're buying privately, you're on your own. If you know your way around a car (or can take someone who does), you can do some checks yourself. The Office of Fair Trading's online guide to buying a used car has a useful checklist to help with this.

If you're not confident about checking the car yourself, you can pay someone to look at it for you. Independent assessors, like Automobile Buyers Services, the AA and RAC, and local garages, offer mechanical inspections for around £100 to £200. Some inspections will also include a history check (see below), value the car and estimate the cost of any repairs. This can be useful when it comes to bargaining.

The downside to a professional inspection is that it can take a few days to organise, and the car may be sold in the meantime.

HISTORY LESSONS

It's not just mechanical problems that you need to worry about. If a car you buy is stolen, is a write-off, or has outstanding finance on it, you could lose it. Legally, a stolen car belongs to the original owner, even if you've bought it unwittingly.

For around £30, you can get a professional car history check, which checks the car's vehicle registration and vehicle identification number against lists of stolen cars, insurance write-offs, or those with outstanding finance or whose number plates have been changed. See 'Contacts' for the main organisations that do this.

The Driver Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) offers a limited Vehicle Check Service, which can confirm a car's date of registration, year of manufacture, engine capacity and colour. This information is available by calling a premium-rate phone line.

If you don't want to pay for these checks, there are some things you can do yourself.

Registration document (V5)

The V5 registration document shows the name of the registered keeper of the vehicle (though it doesn't prove legal ownership). There are some legitimate reasons why a car's V5 may be missing (such as one being auctioned by a finance company after repossession) but, generally, never buy a vehicle without a V5.

There are now two styles of V5 document. Which one you come across will depend on when the vehicle last changed hands. To find out more about this, see the DVLA's website.

The V5 has the three main numbers that identify a car: the registration mark (as on the number plate), vehicle identification number (VIN), and engine number. Check that the numbers on the car itself haven't been tampered with, and that they match those on the V5.

The 17-character VIN on a newer car may be visible through the lower part of the windscreen, or it should be stamped on the bulkhead under the bonnet. It should also be inside the car (have a look on the floor by the driver's seat). If the numbers on the car don't match up, or don't match with what's on the V5, the vehicle could be two written-off cars welded together, or a stolen car given another car's identity.

Mileage

Check the car hasn't been clocked (had its odometer wound back to falsify its mileage). Previous owners' details should be on the V5 – try to contact them to ask about the car's mileage and condition. And use your judgement – if a car hasn't done many miles, the driver's seat, pedals and steering wheel shouldn't be very worn. If they are, be suspicious.

Service records are another good way to check mileage, so ask to see these too.

Other documents

If the car is more than three years old, insist on seeing the MoT certificate (and ask about earlier ones, too, to check the car's mileage). But you shouldn't rely on an MOT certificate to prove that the car is safe or that a car has a genuine history.

More than 20,000 blank test certificates are stolen each year, and these are often used by car thieves to help sell cars to unsuspecting buyers. You can find out whether a certificate is stolen by ringing the Vehicle Inspectorate (VI) – see 'Contacts' for details.

Even if a certificate is genuine, you should never buy a car on the strength of an MOT alone. It isn't a guarantee of mechanical condition; it's only a measure of roadworthiness on the day of the test.

VI is currently developing special computer systems designed to improve MOT testing. They will also link into the vehicle licensing computer at Swansea and the police national computer, to help reduce car crimes such as 'ringing' (where the vehicle identification number doesn't match up with the registration number).

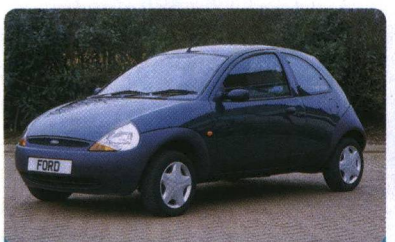
VI is also planning to introduce a customer call centre. If you're thinking of buying a second-hand car, you'll be able to call up and check its MOT history to make sure that it has a genuine mileage.

Look closely at all the documents that are available, and walk away from the deal if you've any doubts. Although they can provide evidence of a car's legitimate history, forgeries can mislead unsuspecting buyers of stolen or written-off cars.

CHEAPER CHOICES

If you're after a car for under £5,000 which has done well in our latest reliability survey (and previous ones, too), you can consider these choices. We've given a typical dealer price range for cars with average mileage – expect to pay less if you buy privately. You'll pay more for lower mileage cars, upmarket models and the newer examples.

SUPERMINIS **Ford Ka** from £3,100, **Nissan Micra** from £1,700, **Toyota Starlet** £2,225 to £6,500, **VW Polo** (1994 onwards) from £3,250
SMALL CARS **Honda Civic** from £2,875, **Mazda 323** (1994-1998) up to £7,675, **Nissan Sunny** (1991-1995) £1,550 to £3,200, **Nissan Almera** (1995-1999) £3,300 to £8,000, **Toyota Corolla** (1992-1997) £2,800 to £5,400, **VW Golf** (1992-1997) £3,000 to £12,000
FAMILY CARS **Nissan Primera** (1990-1996) £1,600 to £4,900, **Nissan Primera** (1996-1999) £3,900 to £8,000, **Toyota Carina E** (1992-1997) £2,625 to £6,850



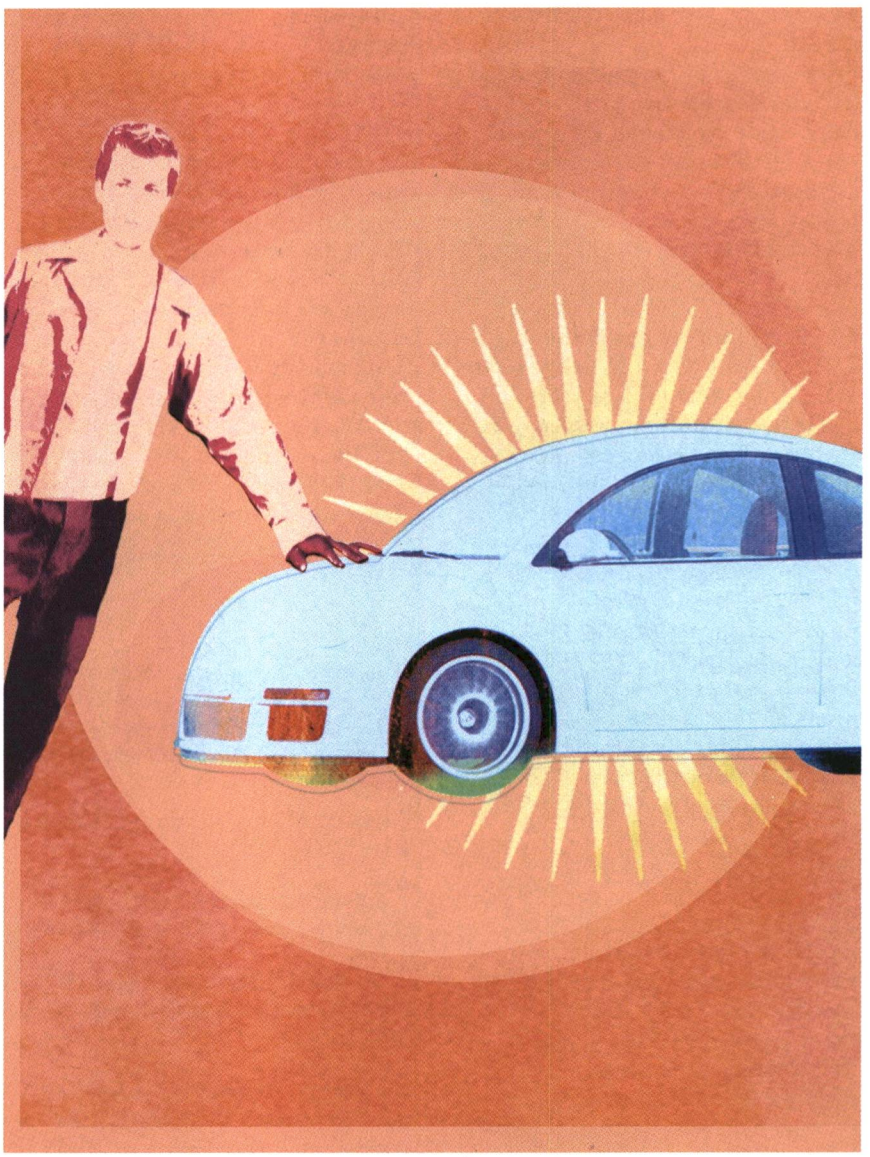
The Ka is one of the few Fords proving reliable

The evergreen VW Golf remains a popular buy

The roomy Toyota Carina E is exceptionally reliable

Reliable impression

When buying a car, you're making a substantial financial commitment to something you may well rely on almost every day. Our survey results help you to pick a trusty workhorse instead of a temperamental mule



Manufacturers continue their struggle to provide trouble-free motoring. They assess and monitor reliability, but this is usually limited to their own model ranges. Most car companies have difficulty gathering independent, unbiased information and what they do find is kept close to their chests.

However, although reliability is a crucial aspect of a car, you wouldn't know it from most manufacturers' ads. They're happy for the spotlight to be on enhanced safety features, a smooth ride and slick handling, and the dazzling style of their cars. This is especially true when they're tempting you to buy, with flashy motor show displays and glossy magazine images.

To help you make a judgement about a car's reliability, our unique annual survey analyses data from real owners who tell us how often they've experienced problems with their cars. Given the appalling record of some big manufacturers, it's hardly surprising that their advertising campaigns sweep reliability under the carpet.

This year, our questionnaire went to 80,000 randomly selected *Which?* readers. Almost 34,000 car owners responded, covering cars up to eight years old. We asked about their experiences over the past 12 months, ranging from breakdowns and repairs through to whether they would recommend their make of car to a friend.

Here we focus on reliability, which includes breakdowns, problems and faults. We've compared the makers by age of car and we've also combined the information to give an overall table of winners and losers – see 'Makers' overall scores', below.

COMPARING CARS

We categorised the cars into three groups: newest cars (up to two years old); recent (three to five years old); and older (six to eight years old). For each group, we looked at:

Breakdowns How often the cars broke down or failed to start.

Problems Whether they developed niggling problems – for example, rattles and squeaks or a loose trim. These don't prevent the car from being used, but they can be annoying or inconvenient.

Faults Car parts that have been replaced or repaired.

THE LOWDOWN ON BREAKDOWNS

This year's overall breakdown rate for the newest cars was 7 per cent – around the same as last year's result. New Daihatsu and Lexus cars recorded no breakdowns during the last 12 months. Bottom of the newest car league were Jaguar, Alfa Romeo and Land Rover, where 11, 14 and 15 per cent, respectively, let down their owners over the last year.

Three- to five-year-old cars show no change in breakdown rates since our last survey, averaging 13 per cent. Honda topped the table with just 4 per cent breaking down. Daihatsu, Proton and Toyota were close behind on 5 per cent. Again, Alfa Romeo and Jaguar conked out the most, both with 25 per cent of models breaking down over the last 12 months. Land Rover followed with 21 per cent, and Audi, Renault and Rover also did poorly.

On a more positive note, older cars are less likely to break down than last year – down two points to 21 per cent. Older makes to avoid are Fiat, with 29 per cent breaking down, and Skoda and Subaru, both on 26 per cent. Last year's lemons, Ford and Citroën, have improved from 30 and 28 per cent respectively, to 24 per cent.

PROBLEMS

The pattern for annoying problems shows the Japanese brands again doing well. Of the newest models, Mazda had the fewest niggles (10 per cent), followed by Honda, Lexus and Suzuki at 11 per cent, and Nissan at 12 per cent.

Bringing up the rear once more were Land Rover at 36 per cent and Alfa Romeo at 33 per cent.

Of the recent cars, the best makers were Daihatsu and Nissan, each with 16 per cent of their cars developing problems over the last 12 months. Suzuki also did well, with 18 per cent.

Propping up the bottom of the recent cars' table, and continuing its poor form, was Alfa Romeo. Almost six out of ten of its models have had problems in the last year. Next came Vauxhall, with 44 per cent, closely followed by Land Rover and Jeep.

In the older model category, the best make for freedom from problems was Subaru – just 14 per cent of its models had niggles over the last 12 months. Citroën had the poorest record at 49 per cent, followed by Peugeot at 47 per cent. We're unable to comment on the number of problems suffered by older Alfa Romeos (one of the worst makers for newest and recent cars), because there weren't enough owners in our survey.

PARTLY AT FAULT

Our survey revealed that, on average, just over a third of new cars have had faulty parts repaired or replaced over the last 12 months. This is a pretty disappointing statistic and is no better than last year.

Mazda topped the table with just 16 per cent of models developing faults. The other reliable brands were also Japanese – Honda, Hyundai, Lexus, Nissan, Subaru and Toyota.

European manufacturers were more often than not towards the wrong end of the table. Land Rover had the worst record, with an appalling 53 per cent of models developing faults during the last year. Next came Alfa Romeo, Seat, Rover, Vauxhall, Volvo, and Mercedes-Benz, all in the 40 to 50 per cent range. Peugeot and Renault had slightly fewer faults, at 39 per cent.

CAN'T RUST, WON'T RUST

Up until relatively recently, a prime cause for the demise of a car was corrosion. In many cases, reasonably new vehicles would be described as 'beyond economical repair' or 'structurally unsound' at the annual MOT inspection, because of rust. More recently, we've reported in *Which? Car* that manufacturers appear to be conquering this ogre.

We're pleased to report that the trend continues. The incidence of rust on cars of all ages has dropped further, with only 0.2 per cent of new cars showing serious rust (down from 1 per cent last year). For recent cars, 1 per cent showed serious rust (no change from last year), and older cars saw a 1 per cent drop to 2 per cent. This is good news and effectively means that this previously undetectable design flaw has now, more or less, been eradicated from new cars.

MAKERS' OVERALL SCORES

Here we show how the major manufacturers rate overall, taking into account reported breakdowns, faults and problems. Makers are listed alphabetically within each group (not from best to worst). The figures in brackets are the numbers of cars of each make used in our analysis.

BEST **Honda** (1,352), **Lexus** (110), **Mazda** (563), **Mercedes-Benz** (836), **Nissan** (2,088), **Toyota** (1,723)

GOOD **Daihatsu** (92), **Hyundai** (195), **Mitsubishi** (306), **Seat** (276), **Skoda** (319), **Subaru** (243), **Suzuki** (180), **VW** (2,636)

AVERAGE **Audi** (811), **BMW** (1,197), **Chrysler** (98), **Daewoo** (334), **Ford** (4,568), **Isuzu** (48), **Jaguar** (251), **Jeep** (108), **Kia** (46), **Proton** (124), **Saab** (521)

POOR **Alfa Romeo** (160), **Citroën** (1,218), **Fiat** (855), **Land Rover** (500), **Peugeot** (2,360), **Renault** (2,188), **Rover** (2,306), **Vauxhall** (3,525), **Volvo** (1,043)

BREAKDOWNS BY BRAND

These league tables show the percentage of newest cars (up to two years old), recent cars (three to five years old), and older cars (six to eight years old) that have broken down in the past 12 months

None of the new Daihatsus in our survey had broken down

Hondas, including the Civic, have been reliable for years

NEWEST MODELS

		Sample size
Daihatsu	0	34
Lexus	0	59
Mazda	1	188
Mitsubishi	1	89
Toyota	2	578
Honda	3	489
Saab	3	154
Chrysler	4	46
Nissan	4	509
Suzuki	4	73
Audi	5	277
Citroën	5	274
Peugeot	5	716
Skoda	5	184
Subaru	5	113
Volvo	5	262
Fiat	6	233
Ford	6	1391
Mercedes-Benz	7	357
Seat	7	132
BMW	8	442
Hyundai	8	73
Renault	9	804
Rover	9	440
Vauxhall	9	982
VW	9	1026
Daewoo	10	167
Jaguar	11	99
Alfa Romeo	14	90
Land Rover	15	183

RECENT MODELS

		Sample size
Honda	4	576
Daihatsu	5	37
Proton	5	57
Toyota	5	736
Seat	6	104
Mazda	7	247
Jeep	8	51
Mitsubishi	8	142
Lexus	9	32
Suzuki	9	76
Mercedes-Benz	10	320
Nissan	10	906
VW	10	1111
Ford	11	1965
Subaru	11	92
Chrysler	13	52
Citroën	13	508
Hyundai	13	98
Skoda	13	100
Volvo	13	457
Peugeot	14	1000
BMW	15	500
Daewoo	16	146
Fiat	16	430
Saab	16	236
Vauxhall	16	1507
Rover	17	989
Audi	18	376
Renault	19	953
Land Rover	21	180
Alfa Romeo	25	60
Jaguar	25	98

OLDER MODELS

		Sample size
Mazda	9	128
Honda	10	287
Proton	10	48
Toyota	11	409
Seat	13	40
Nissan	14	673
Mercedes-Benz	17	159
Mitsubishi	17	75
BMW	18	255
Suzuki	19	31
Vauxhall	19	1036
Audi	20	158
Jaguar	21	54
VW	22	499
Land Rover	23	137
Citroën	24	436
Ford	24	1212
Volvo	24	324
Peugeot	25	644
Renault	25	431
Rover	25	877
Saab	25	131
Skoda	26	35
Subaru	26	38
Fiat	29	192

Readers rate their cars

Would you recommend your car to a friend? More than 33,000 Which? members give us the lowdown on their cars

Road tests in newspapers and magazines can tell you how fast a car goes, how it handles and how economical it is. And our reliability ratings tell you which cars are prone to breakdowns and faults. But there's nothing like personal recommendation, and most of us still value the opinion of someone who already owns the model we're interested in.

As part of our annual car survey, we asked more than 33,000 *Which?* members for an honest opinion of their car. They told us how practical the car was (storage space and ease of getting in and out, for example), how comfortable it was, and what its performance was like. We also asked them the crucial question of whether or not they'd recommend their car to a friend.

The owners' answers to our detailed questionnaire revealed huge differences between makes. For example, almost nine out of ten Subaru owners would definitely recommend their car to a friend, but fewer than half the Rover and Vauxhall drivers would. Subaru, Isuzu and Lexus topped this year's league table, with the highest proportion of owners saying they would recommend their car to a friend.

Many brands had similar positions to last year's table, but owners' overall satisfaction with new cars seems to be improving – especially at the bottom of the table. Those makers with the most improved ratings, compared with last year's survey, include Audi, Ford, Honda, Rover and Volvo.

MODEL BY MODEL

We've looked more closely at different models of car, and picked out the ones that did particularly well, and those that propped up the pile – see the boxes, below. For each class of car, we've listed the most liked cars in order of their recommendation score, with the highest scoring car first. The list of least liked cars begins with the one with the lowest satisfaction score.

Some of the models new to this year's list of most-liked cars are the Citroën Xsara Picasso, Jaguar S-type, Lexus IS200, Peugeot 206, Rover 75, Skoda Fabia, Vauxhall Zafira and VW Bora.

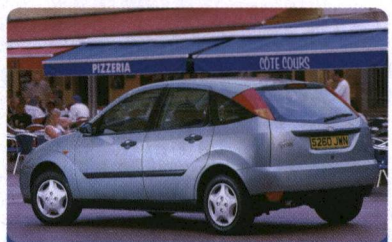
SUPERMINIS

The Daewoo Matiz is one of the cheapest superminis you can buy, yet owners rave about it. The only criticism is its small boot

MOST LIKED **Skoda Fabia, Toyota Yaris, Daewoo Matiz, Suzuki Wagon R+, Nissan Micra, Toyota Starlet, Peugeot 206, Renault Clio** (from 1998), **VW Polo** (from 1994), **Ford Ka**
LEAST LIKED Rover 100/Metro, Ford Fiesta (91-95), Fiat Cinquecento, Vauxhall Corsa (93-2000), Peugeot 106, Renault Clio (91-98), Fiat Punto (94-99), Ford Fiesta (from 1995)

SMALL CARS

MOST LIKED **Subaru Impreza** (93-2000), **Audi A3, Toyota Corolla** (from 1997), **VW Golf** (from 1997), **Ford Focus, Skoda Felicia, VW Bora, VW Golf/Vento** (92-98), **Mazda 323** (from 1998), **Honda Civic** (95-2000)
LEAST LIKED Daewoo Nexia, Fiat Tipo, Ford Escort/Orion, Citroën ZX, Fiat Bravo/Brava, Vauxhall Astra (91-98), Rover 45/400, Rover 25/200, Citroën Xsara, Peugeot 306

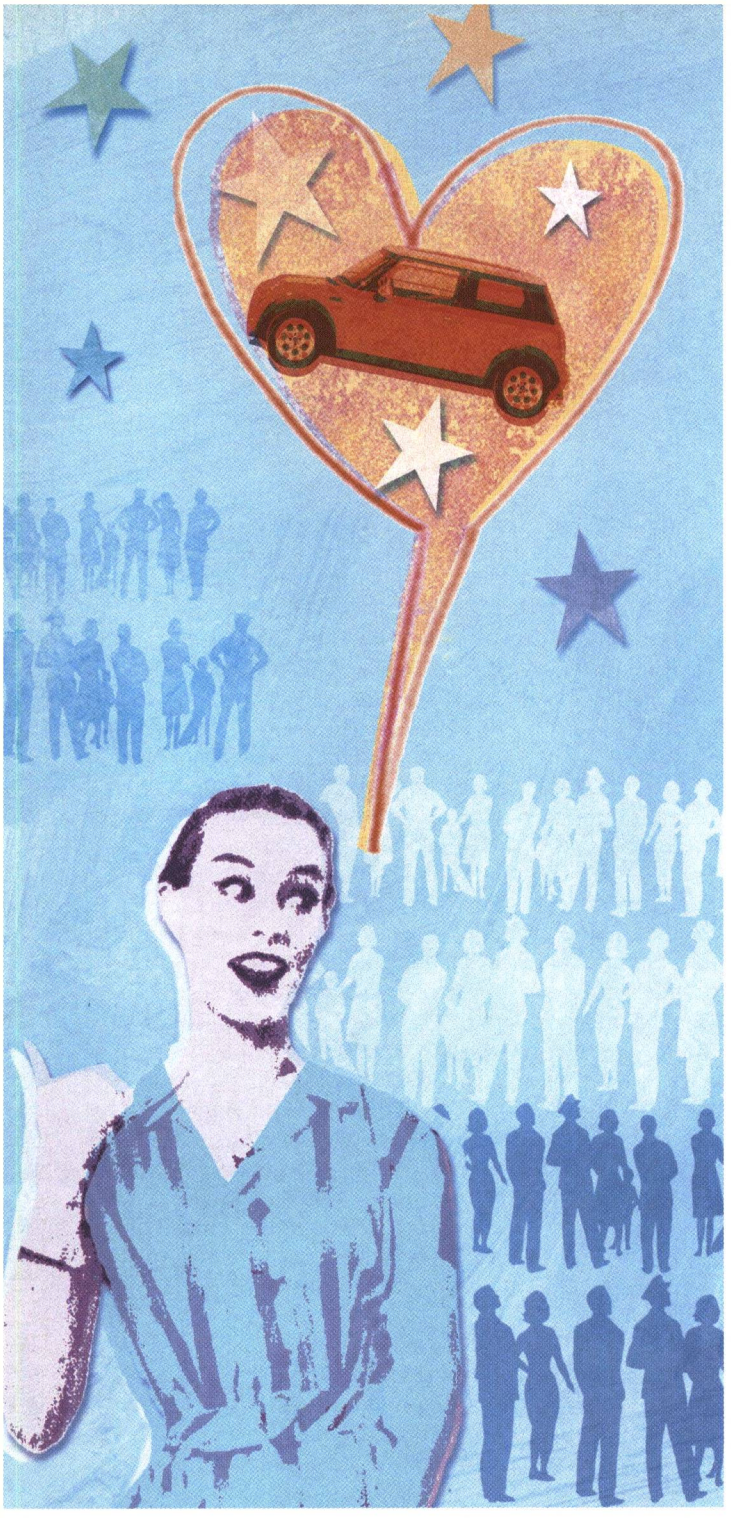


Ford has found a real winner with the Focus, and it's worth considering

FAMILY CARS

The Skoda Octavia is well liked and cheap to own

MOST LIKED **Subaru Forester, Lexus IS200, Rover 75, Skoda Octavia, BMW 3-series** (from 1998), **Subaru Legacy** (94-98), **Honda Accord** (from 1998), **VW Passat** (from 1997), **Audi A4** (95-2000), **Audi 80/Cabriolet, BMW 3-series** (91-98), **Nissan Primera** (from 1999), **Toyota Carina E, Nissan Primera** (90-99), **Toyota Avensis**
LEAST LIKED Vauxhall Vectra, Volvo 440/460, Daewoo Nubira, Citroën Xantia, Rover 600, Renault Laguna (94-2000), Ford Mondeo (93-2000)



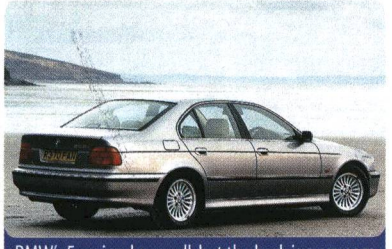
MAJOR CAR MAKES COMPARED

This league table shows the percentage of people in our survey who said they would definitely recommend their car to a friend

		Sample size
Subaru	87	240
Isuzu	85	48
Lexus	85	108
BMW	79	1187
Jaguar	79	248
Skoda	79	315
Audi	77	804
Toyota	76	1697
Mercedes-Benz	73	821
Honda	72	1339
Nissan	72	2064
VW	72	2594
Mazda	70	558
Mitsubishi	67	303
Saab	66	512
Volvo	66	1019
Proton	65	119
Seat	65	273
Hyundai	63	191
Daihatsu	61	92
Alfa Romeo	60	156
Jeep	60	107
Renault	60	2153
Peugeot	59	2326
Suzuki	59	176
Chrysler	56	98
Daewoo	56	330
Ford	56	4477
Kia	56	43
Land Rover	56	491
Fiat	50	841
Citroën	49	1191
Rover	48	2246
Vauxhall	48	3456

EXECUTIVE CARS

MOST LIKED **BMW 5-series** (from 1996), **BMW 7-series** (from 1994), **Jaguar S-type**, **Audi A6** (from 1997), **Mercedes-Benz E-class** (from 1995)
LEAST LIKED Rover 800, Vauxhall Omega, Ford Scorpio



BMW's 5-series does well, but the back is a squeeze

OFF-ROADERS

The Honda CR-V is great to drive and is reliable, but we haven't assessed its safety and security

MOST LIKED **Isuzu Trooper** (92-98), **Honda CR-V**, **Toyota RAV4** (94-2000)
LEAST LIKED Vauxhall Frontera, Land Rover Discovery

MPVs/SMALL MPVs

MOST LIKED MPVs **Toyota Picnic**, **Honda Shuttle**
LEAST LIKED MPV Ford Galaxy
MOST LIKED SMALL MPVs[1] **Citroën Xsara Picasso**, **Renault Scénic/Scénic RX4**, **Vauxhall Zafira**

1 Small MPVs were compared with small cars

Citroën's Xsara Picasso has no major drawbacks

Taking the safe option

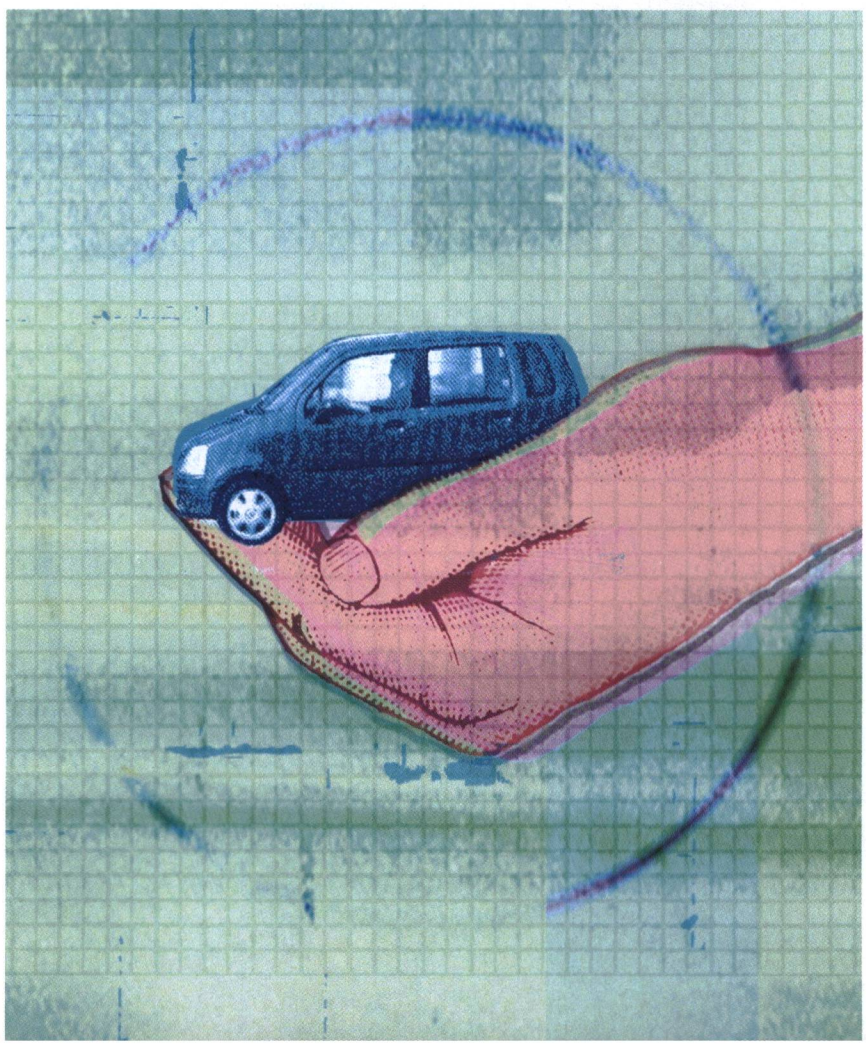
Car safety continues to improve but this is no cause for complacency. In our latest roundup of assessments, Volvo is setting the pace

We've rated the secondary safety of 16 new cars, mainly in the small car and family car classes. Most have done well, and the Volvo S60 and S80 have set new overall standards. We've also included the safety scores of the 61 cars previously featured in *Which?*.

HOW WE RATE CAR SAFETY

Car makers now accept that safety is a key selling point, but as our league tables, opposite, show, some have improved their cars more than others.

Our experts assess secondary safety by looking at how well the cars would protect all occupants in different types of crash – head-on, side, rear, and roll-over. We also take the weight of the car into account, as, all things being equal, a heavier car tends to be safer than a lighter one. This means the scores can be compared across all classes of car.



EURO NCAP CRASH TESTS

We are partners in the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP), which subjects cars to front- and side-impact crashes (the two most common types of crash). Pedestrian safety and the protection offered by child seats are also assessed.

Euro NCAP's star ratings can't be compared across substantially different classes because the front impact test replicates a crash between two identically-sized cars.

There are some differences between the Euro NCAP results and our own assessments. This is mainly because Euro NCAP has tested a different version of the same car. However, both systems generally reveal a similar overall picture, and some findings from Euro NCAP – data on bodyshell strength and side-impact protection – are being used to improve our assessment system.

WHAT'S NEW?

New cars are generally becoming stronger and passenger compartments are getting stiffer. This means better protection in the event of a crash, but it can also subject occupants to greater forces. So airbags and seat belt systems are more critical than ever.

It's now virtually standard for new cars to have two front airbags. Side airbags have spread rapidly since their introduction, and side head-protection airbags are also becoming more common. The BMWs we looked at use head protection 'tubes', rather than the 'curtains' often found on other cars. Side curtain airbags may offer more wide-ranging protection.

Hard structures near the driver's knees are generally in a better position, and better padded, in most new cars. Both the Mercedes-Benz C-class and Renault Laguna have keyless ignition systems, which remove the threat posed by more conventional steering column and ignition locks.

SAFETY SCORES

We've rated cars for how well they should protect you in a variety of crashes. The higher the score, the safer the car. The best score achieved so far is 13. Our scores use the same criteria whatever the size of car, which means you can compare scores for cars in different classes. Scores can vary slightly across a model range depending on the exact specification, so we assessed models that are typical for that range. Cars newly tested for this article are highlighted in **orange**.

Where cars have the same secondary safety score, we've ordered them according to their Euro NCAP star rating (if they have one). This is a different type of safety rating system from our own. Euro NCAP scores are out of five stars, with a ☆ indicating an unacceptably high risk of serious injury in a particular type of impact. A car rated ★★☆ is considered safer overall than one rated ★★, but worse than one rated ★★★.

SUPERMINIS

		Euro NCAP score
Skoda Fabia	9.5	★★★★
Renault Clio	8.5	★★★★
Toyota Yaris	8.5	★★★★
VW Lupo	8.5	★★★★
Fiat Punto	8	★★★★
VW Polo	8	★★★★
Ford Fiesta	8	★★★
Seat Ibiza	8	★★★
Seat Arosa	8	
Vauxhall Agila	8	
Vauxhall Corsa	8	
Peugeot 206	7.5	★★★★
Ford Ka	7.5	★★★
Nissan Micra	7	★★
Peugeot 106	6.5	
Citroën Saxo	6	★★
Perodua Nippa	4	
Suzuki Alto	4	

SMALL CARS

	10.5	
Ford Focus	10	★★★★
Honda Civic	10	★★★★
VW Golf	10	★★★★
Audi A3	9.5	★★★★
Renault Mégane	9.5	★★★★
Toyota Corolla	9.5	★★★
Alfa Romeo 147	9.5	
Mercedes-Benz A-class	9	★★★★
Nissan Almera	9	★★★★
Vauxhall Astra	9	★★★★
Citroën Xsara	8.5	★★★
Peugeot 306	8.5	★★★
Fiat Brava	8.5	★★
Audi A2	8.5	
Mazda 323	8	
Rover 45	8	
Hyundai Accent	7.5	★☆
Chrysler Neon	7.5	
Rover 25	7.5	
Suzuki Baleno	6.5	★☆
Proton Wira	6.5	

MPVs AND SMALL MPVs

		Euro NCAP score
Chrysler PT Cruiser	10.5	
Renault Scénic	9.5	★★★★
Mazda Premacy	9.5	★★★
Toyota Yaris Verso	9.5	
Citroën Xsara Picasso	9	★★★★
Vauxhall Zafira	9	★★★
Fiat Multipla	8.5	★★★
Mitsubishi Space Star	8	★★★

FAMILY CARS

Volvo S60	12.5	
Volvo S40	11.5	★★★★
Renault Laguna	11	★★★★★
Audi A4	11	★★★★
Mercedes-Benz C-class	11	★★★★
Lexus IS200	11	
Honda Accord	10.5	★★★★
Rover 75	10.5	★★★★
Saab 9-3	10.5	★★★★
BMW 3-series	10.5	
VW Passat	10	★★★★
Vauxhall Vectra	10	★★☆
Peugeot 406	10	★★
Citroën C5	10	
Ford Mondeo	10	
Skoda Octavia	10	
Toyota Avensis	10	
Nissan Primera	9.5	★★★
Fiat Marea	9	
Hyundai Elantra	9	
Mistusbishi Carisma	8.5	★★★
Alfa Romeo 156	8.5	
Mazda 626	8.5	
Daewoo Nubira	8	

EXECUTIVE CARS

Volvo S80	13	★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E-class	12	★★★★
Audi A6	11.5	★★★
BMW 5-series	11	★★★★
Vauxhall Omega	11	★★★

But we're still concerned by some safety features, such as head restraints. 'Active' versions, as found on the Ford Mondeo, Nissan Almera and Vauxhall Corsa, move upwards and forwards in a crash to try to prevent whiplash. But well designed, fixed restraints, like those in the Volvo S60 and S80, would probably be more effective in a crash.

Airbag warning labels about using a rearward-facing child seat in the front can still be improved. Ideally, all new cars should automatically disable the passenger airbag if any child seat is detected – but we've yet to see one that does. Some manufacturers, such as Mazda, Mercedes-Benz and Vauxhall, have systems that work only with their own-brand child seats, but a universal solution is needed to address this serious issue.

Window shopping

New cars are getting harder to steal, but their contents are still there for the taking. In the UK's largest independent security test, we give results for 67 different models

The Home Office estimates that around 900 vehicles are stolen every day. But, while improvements in immobilisers, locks and alarms have reduced the number of cars being stolen, the valuables inside a car are still vulnerable. There are almost 5,000 thefts of items from cars every day, and a household has a one in eight chance of being a victim of car crime over the next 12 months.

ASSESSING SECURITY

In our quest to convince car makers to improve their cars' security, we've been breaking into cars for almost 40 years. Our resident 'thief' has cracked the systems of around 1,000 cars – in most cases with worrying ease. New security features are making some cars harder to break into and steal, but it can take a long time before the latest designs are incorporated into all new models.

Our security ratings are based on the time it takes to overcome, or remove, each individual security feature using methods familiar to experienced car thieves. The longer it takes, the higher the score. Credit is given where special tools or techniques are needed.

We've assessed the security of 14 new models especially for this year's *Which? Car*, and listed these in our tables, opposite, along with 53 previously tested cars. For each car, we give a rating, out of 10, for how easily it can be stolen ('theft of') and how easy it is to break in ('theft from').

CLEAR NEED FOR BETTER GLAZING

Windows are still a real weak point on almost all cars because the toughened glass used is very easy to break. Car crime could be reduced significantly if makers fitted laminated side glass, as it's much harder to break. This type of glass is already used in windscreens.

Laminated glass is available on some luxury cars and as an option (at around £300 to £400) from makers including Audi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot, Renault and Volvo. The industry predicts that it will appear on more mainstream models in the next few years.

MAKING THIEVES WORK HARDER

We were pleased to see a new high score of seven in our 'theft from' test, set by the BMW 3-series. This car, along with the larger 5-series, picked up points for having secure boot space. We couldn't overcome their boot locks, and their rigid back seats make it very hard to get into the boot from inside the car, too. The secure luggage area (which houses part of the stereo system) means that these cars get the highest 'theft from' scores achieved to date.

Two of the models on test this time, the new Renault Laguna and Mercedes-Benz C-class, have keyless ignition. The Laguna's smart card needs to be inserted into a slot in the dash to release the steering lock and fire the ignition, while the Mercedes-Benz C-class has a plastic 'key'. Both systems are electronic. Our 'thief' found them harder to crack than traditional mechanical ignitions.

Lockable gloveboxes are notoriously easy to open on most cars. But the Honda Accord has one of the most secure gloveboxes we've seen. The lock is well shielded and difficult to access. It's the only model to get maximum points for glovebox security.

Some new cars have stereos that work only in the original vehicle because they are coded to the vehicle identification number (VIN). This is similar to normal security coding, but you don't need to remember the number – the stereo automatically 'talks' to the car's computer before it will work. The Nissan Almera has the best design we've seen, as its stereo won't physically fit other models.

The Alfa Romeo 147, Citroën C5, and S40, S60 and S80 from Volvo, also have VIN-coded systems, but aren't as good because their stereos fit other cars. This means a thief may not realise that it won't work in another car, and still break in to steal it.

SECURITY RATINGS

We rated the cars out of ten for both theft from the car and theft of the car itself. Within car classes, we then ordered them on their 'theft from' rating, as there's still plenty of room for improvement. Cars newly assessed are highlighted in **orange**

The 'theft from' rating takes into account how easy it is to break into the passenger compartment, luggage space, and glovebox, plus how secure the stereo, alarm protection and wheels are.

The 'theft of' rating takes into account the effectiveness of the electronic immobiliser, steering/ignition lock, door locks, and alarm system. We also check whether the vehicle identification number (VIN) is visible.

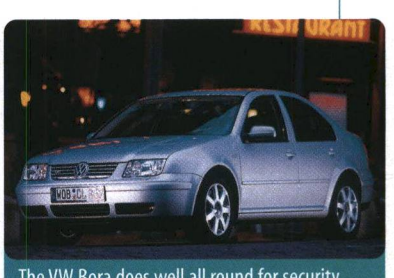
SUPERMINIS	Theft of	Theft from
Vauxhall Agila 1.0 5dr[1]	6	4
Skoda Fabia 1.4 Elegance 5dr	8	3
Ford Ka 1.3i 3dr	6	3
Nissan Micra 1.0 S 3dr	6	3
Toyota Yaris 1.0 GLS 3dr[2]	6	3
Vauxhall Corsa 1.0 GLS 3dr	6	3
VW Lupo 1.4 S 3dr	7	2
VW Polo 1.4 S 5dr	7	2
Citroën Saxo 1.1i SX 5dr	6	2
Fiat Punto 1.9 D 60S 3dr	6	2
Ford Fiesta 1.25 LX 3dr	6	2
Peugeot 206 1.1 LX 5dr	6	2
Peugeot 106 1.1 Zest 3dr	6	2
Renault Clio 1.2 Authentique 3dr	6	1
Seat Arosa 1.0 3dr	6	1

SMALL CARS		
VW Bora 1.9 TDi 90 S 4dr	8	4
Nissan Almera 1.8i SE+ 5dr	7	4
Audi A3 1.6 3dr	6	4
Renault Mégane 1.6 Dynamique 5dr	6	4
Toyota Corolla 1.6 GS 5dr[2]	6	4
Audi A2 1.4 5dr	8	3
Mercedes-Benz A140 Classic 5dr	7	3
Alfa Romeo 147 1.6 TS Turismo 3dr	6	3
Fiat Brava 80 SX 5dr	6	3
Ford Focus 1.8 LX 5dr	6	3
Honda Civic 1.6i SE 5dr	6	3
Mazda 323F Shiraz 1.3 5dr[2]	6	3
Rover 45 1.4 iS 5dr	6	3
Rover 25 1.4 iS 5dr	6	3
Vauxhall Astra 1.6i LS 5dr	6	3
VW Golf 1.6 S 5dr	7	2
Citroën Xsara 1.4i 5dr	7	1

MPVs AND SMALL MPVs		
Renault Espace 2.0 Authentique 5dr	6	5
Chrysler PT Cruiser Touring 5dr	7	4
Chrysler Voyager 2.5 CRD LX 5dr	7	4
Renault Scénic 1.6 Expression 5dr	7	3
Toyota Yaris Verso 1.3 4dr	7	3
Mazda Premacy 1.8 GSi 5dr[2]	6	3
Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 Comfort 5dr	6	3
Citroën Xsara Picasso 1.6i SX 5dr	7	2
Fiat Multipla 100 ELX 5dr	6	2
Mitsubishi Space Star 1.3i Equippe 5dr	6	2
Toyota Picnic 2.0 GLS 5dr[2]	6	2

FAMILY CARS	Theft of	Theft from
BMW 318i SE 4dr	8	7
Mercedes-Benz C200 Kompressor Elegance 4dr	7	5
Volvo S60 2.0 T 4dr	7	5
Toyota Avensis 2.0 GLS 5dr[2]	6	5
Audi A4 2.0 SE 4dr	8	4
Honda Accord 2.0i SE 5dr	8	4
Lexus IS200 4dr	8	4
VW Passat 2.0 S 4dr	8	4
Ford Mondeo 1.8 LX 5dr	7	4
Rover 75 1.8 Club 4dr	7	4
Alfa Romeo 156 2.0 T Spark 4dr	6	4
Vauxhall Vectra 1.8i LS 5dr	6	4
Citroën C5 1.8 LX 5dr	8	3
Renault Laguna 1.6 Expression 5dr	8	3
Peugeot 406 2.0 HDi GLX 4dr	6	3
Volvo S40 2.0 SE 4dr	6	3
Skoda Octavia 1.8 Turbo Elegance 5dr	8	2
Daewoo Nubira 2.0 CDX Estate 5dr	6	2
Fiat Marea 150 ELX 4dr	5	2
Mazda 626 2.0 GSi 5dr[2]	7	1

EXECUTIVE CARS		
BMW 520i SE 4dr	8	6
Volvo S80 2.4 S 4dr	8	5
Mercedes-Benz E240 Elegance 4dr	8	4
Audi A6 2.8 Quattro Sport 4dr	8	3



The VW Bora does well all round for security

The BMW 3-series has set a new standard

1 Deadlocks are an optional extra and would increase the 'theft of' score to 8
2 Since our tests, deadlocks have been added or locks have been improved. 'Theft of' scores may increase by up to two points

Franchised dealers rated

If you believe the car manufacturers, the only way to get a good service is to take your car to a franchised dealer. But there's no proof to support this

The problem consumers face is that most of us don't know much about cars and it's impossible for us to tell whether garages are giving us a raw deal. Every time *Which?* investigates garage servicing, we find the same story – garages routinely miss faults, recommend unnecessary work, and charge for items they don't fit.

The standard of work is equally poor across both franchised dealers and independents. Indeed, the only difference between franchised dealers and independents seems to be the cost – dealers can charge 50 per cent more than other garages for the same work. For more details, see 'Secret service', *Which?*, September 1999, p8.

More than 25,000 *Which?* members told us what they thought of the customer care they received when buying a car, and the standard of the work and customer care when taking their car for a service or repair. See the league tables, opposite, for how the franchised dealers compare.

CUSTOMER CARE

How well a garage services your car is only half the story. The way it deals with you is also important. If you have to wait, is the reception area pleasant? Is your car ready on time? Did the garage give you an explanation about any repairs? All these factors affect your view of a garage.

GOOD AND BAD DEALERS

There were large differences between makes, but there was generally a good correlation between the position of dealers in our two league tables. So those dealers which have good general customer care when selling a car also seem to have got it right when it comes to carrying out repairs.

Luxury makes Lexus and Jaguar did well all round, with more than three-quarters of owners being very satisfied with their dealers. It's probably just as well that Jaguar scored so highly with servicing and repairs, because Jaguar models have been consistently poor for the number of breakdowns, and owners would have had plenty of chance to get to know their dealers.

But it's not just prestigious manufacturers that are doing well. Daewoo, Daihatsu and Subaru also scored highly for both customer care when buying and for servicing/repairs.

But the Italian manufacturers Alfa Romeo and Fiat could do much better. Both makes prop up the bottom of our league tables. Only a third of Alfa owners said they were very satisfied with their dealer when their car needed work.

INDEPENDENTS

There was a mixed message from owners who had used independent garages. Almost two-thirds of people who took their cars to independents for servicing and repairs said they were very satisfied. This puts them in the top band compared with franchised dealers, well above the dealer average of 57 per cent.

This bears out our previous investigations which have found that franchised dealers are no better than independents for servicing and repairs – just more expensive. And it makes a mockery of manufacturers' claims that the current system of franchised dealers benefits consumers.

Independents did less well for customer care when buying a car. Only 39 per cent of people said they were very satisfied. However, in this instance, it's difficult to compare the two types of garage because independent garages aren't allowed to sell new cars – these are restricted to the dealer networks.

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR GARAGE

There are a few things you can do to improve your chances of getting a good service or repair.

When choosing a garage, friends' advice can be helpful, and some local trading standards departments run approved garage schemes.

Make sure the garage is qualified to look at your car. Modern cars are

BUYING A CAR

This league table shows the percentage of people in our survey who were very satisfied with customer care

		Sample size
Jaguar	80	147
Lexus	75	53
BMW	72	637
Daewoo	72	251
Daihatsu	72	65
Subaru	72	178
Proton	69	85
Hyundai	68	148
Mercedes-Benz	68	499
Mitsubishi	67	212
Skoda	67	259
Toyota	65	1233
Honda	64	956
Saab	64	318
Jeep	63	68
Mazda	63	391
Volvo	60	691
Audi	59	421
Kia	58	31
Land Rover	58	310
Suzuki	57	127
Nissan	55	1449
Chrysler	54	65
Seat	54	196
Vauxhall	53	1873
Citroën	51	746
Rover	51	1323
Renault	49	1305
Peugeot	48	1439
VW	48	1694
Ford	46	2469
independents	39	3150
Alfa Romeo	38	73
Fiat	38	495

SERVICING AND REPAIRS

This league table gives the percentage of people in our survey who were very satisfied with customer care and the quality of the work

		Sample size
Lexus	83	48
Jaguar	75	147
Subaru	74	169
Daihatsu	73	51
Proton	70	76
Skoda	67	226
Daewoo	65	232
Honda	65	835
Suzuki	65	113
BMW	64	693
Hyundai	64	133
independents	64	5990
Toyota	64	1075
Jeep	63	67
Mazda	63	344
Mercedes-Benz	62	508
Chrysler	61	56
Saab	61	306
Mitsubishi	60	199
Nissan	58	1132
Land Rover	57	286
Audi	56	437
Seat	54	159
Volvo	54	663
Citroën	53	597
Rover	51	972
Vauxhall	48	1628
Peugeot	47	1100
Renault	47	1095
VW	45	1537
Ford	43	1995
Fiat	40	354
Alfa Romeo	35	83

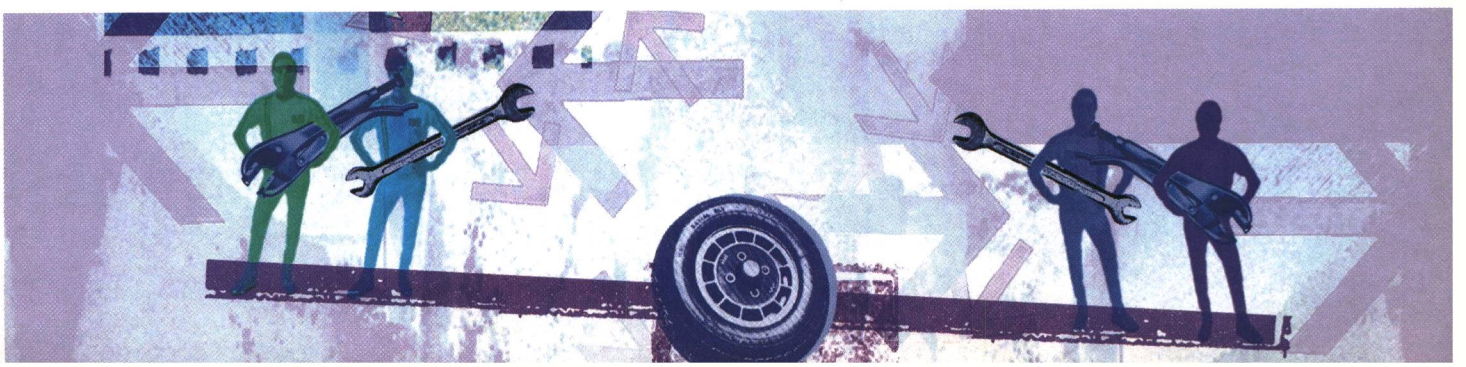
complicated and some smaller back-street garages might not have the specialist equipment needed to examine your car's system. Ask whether the workshop is equipped with the right diagnostic equipment and has experience with that make.

When you take your car for a service, be clear about the exact service you want – do you want a full service, or just a 6,000 mile one? And if you want a particular problem fixed, be clear about it – for example, does the problem occur at certain times?

Get a fixed quote for routine work such as a service. For any other work, get an estimate or agree an upper limit. Tell the garage that, if it finds a problem, it should ask for your approval before proceeding.

If it recommends extra work, get a few quotes from other garages first.

Ask for a written invoice, broken down into parts and labour, and check it before paying. Also, ask the mechanic to show you what was wrong with any part that was replaced.



Car running costs

The road tax is due, the MOT's running out, and the insurance is up for renewal. That's an extra few hundred pounds out of the window next month. But there are ways to cut your motoring costs

Car bills all seem to come along at once and can make a big dent in your wallet. Even before you turn the ignition, your car costs money. Depreciation, road tax and insurance all contribute to motoring bills. Although you have to pay for them, there are things you can do to reduce these outgoings.

DEPRECIATION HITS THE HARDEST

As soon as you drive out of a showroom your car has cost you hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds. The biggest loss is in the first year, but the longer you keep the car, the more it loses value. For example, a new five-door Peugeot 206 1.4 GLX has a list price of £10,765. After six months it may be worth only around £8,000. You could resell it after a year for around £6,500 and it will continue to lose about £1,000 a year.

A car's mileage also plays a part in depreciation. Resale values are based on driving 10,000 to 12,000 miles a year, and you can expect to lose a further £300 to £400 if you drive an extra 10,000 miles in a year.

But some cars hold their value better than others. A VW Passat 2.0 SE costs £15,790. In three years time it will be worth about £6,700 – a loss of around £9,000 in depreciation. In contrast, a Fiat Marea 150 HLX, with a list price of £15,125, could be worth as little as £4,000 after three years – less than 30 per cent of its original price. This means it's lost a staggering £11,000 in depreciation.

The best way to avoid a big loss is not to buy a brand new car. The greatest drop in value is during the first few months of a car's life, so consider a nearly-new or used car.

ROAD TAX

New road tax rules, which came into force earlier this year, are designed to encourage you to buy cars that pollute less. Cars registered from 1 March 2001 are taxed according to the type of fuel they use and the amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2) they emit.

Models are put into one of four CO_2 bands, from A (the lowest) to D (the highest). Band A petrol cars attract a duty of £100 a year, while band D cars are charged £155. Diesel cars have tax rates ranging from £110 to £160 a year. And tax for cars which use alternative fuels, such as liquefied petroleum gas, is £90 to £150.

Older models – those first registered before March 2001 – are taxed according to engine size. Cars with engine sizes of less than 1,550cc are taxed at a reduced rate of £105 a year. Larger models have a duty of £160.

INSURANCE COSTS

Insurance premiums have increased in recent years. Insurers say this is due to spiralling injury claims. However, insurance is one running cost where it's simple to make savings by choosing the right car and by shopping around for a cheaper quote.

Car insurance premiums are based on the model of car and your own personal situation. Cars are divided into 20 insurance groups based on factors such as how much they cost to

CUT RUNNING COSTS

DEPRECIATION

- Reduce the cost of depreciation by choosing a model which holds its value well or buy a used or nearly new car.

INSURANCE

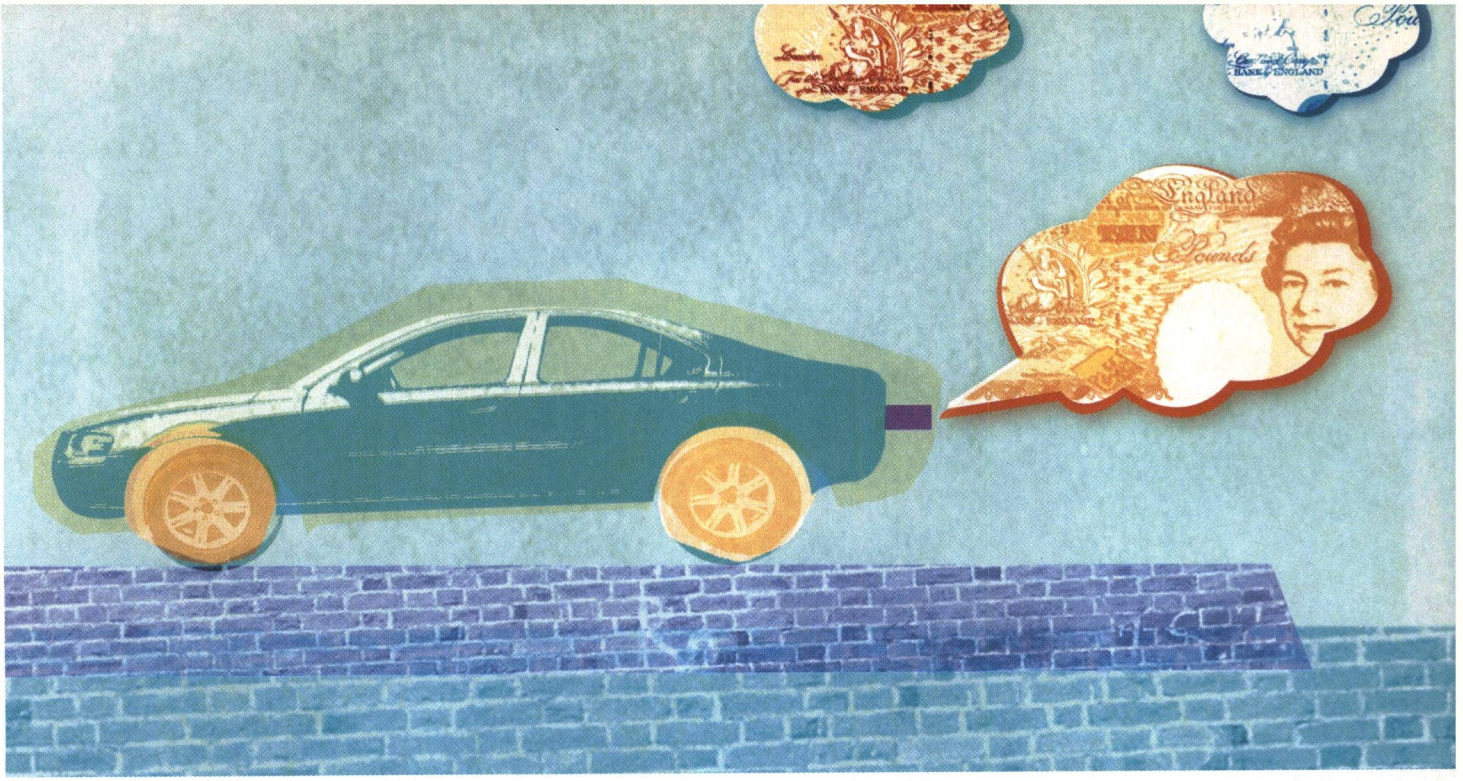
- Don't automatically renew your insurance with the same company. Insurance premiums can vary by hundreds of pounds so ring around, or use the internet, to get a few quotes
- Insurance companies usually offer discounts if you fit approved security devices to your car – contact the company for details.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

- Do you really need to drive? Over 60 per cent of the journeys we make between one and two miles are by car.
- Smoother driving uses less fuel than hard acceleration and braking.
- Have your car regularly serviced. This should keep the engine running efficiently, and will keep fuel consumption and exhaust emissions to a minimum.
- It's worth being aware of the factors that affect fuel consumption. Driving with a window or sunroof open, driving with an empty roofrack, having under inflated tyres, idling in a traffic queue, and using air conditioning, all eat into your fuel consumption.

GARAGE BILLS

- Choosing a reliable car should help keep repair bills down – see 'Reliable impression', p15.
- When you need work done, get some quotes first. Prices vary enormously between garages. Franchised dealers typically charge 50 per cent more for some jobs than independent garages, even though you're unlikely to get better workmanship.



repair, how desirable they are to thieves and how secure they are. For example, a typical quote for a group two car, such as a Daewoo Matiz, is £250, while a group 10 car, like a Ford Mondeo 2.0 Ghia, may be around £450.

Personal factors, such as age, sex, profession and where you live, also affect insurance costs. Living in a high-risk area can dramatically increase your insurance compared with living in a low-risk one.

But, despite all these different factors, one of the largest variables seems to be the insurance companies themselves. Quotes for the same person and car can easily vary by more than 100 per cent between insurers. So one easy money-saving measure is to simply ring around a few insurers and brokers.

FUEL

For most of us, fuel is the second biggest running cost after depreciation. If you drive 12,000 miles a year in a car which averages 35 miles per gallon, such as a 2-litre VW Passat, your fuel bill alone will be over £1,250. On the other hand, the cost of fuel of a 1.9-litre turbo diesel Passat, averaging 51mpg, will be less than £850.

GARAGE BILLS

Most models now come with a three-year warranty, and some need a service only once a year. This, combined with improving reliability, means that visits to the garage are becoming less frequent. However, you can reduce garage bills further by choosing a reliable make of car. In our survey, new Toyotas, for example, are four times less likely to break down than new VWs.

When things do go wrong, parts and labour charges can be high – dealers can charge over £60 an hour for their time – so get a few quotes first.

SUPERMINIS

CHEAPEST **Citroën Saxo, Daewoo Matiz, Fiat Punto, Nissan Micra, Peugeot 106, Renault Clio, Toyota Yaris, VW Polo**
MOST EXPENSIVE Ford Fiesta, Seat Ibiza

SMALL CARS

CHEAPEST **Daewoo Lanos, Hyundai Accent, Renault Mégane, Skoda Felicia**
MOST EXPENSIVE Audi A3, Citroën Xsara, Mercedes-Benz A-class, Vauxhall Zafira, VW Bora, VW Golf

FAMILY CARS

CHEAPEST **Daewoo Nubira, Skoda Octavia**
MOST EXPENSIVE Saab 9-3, Vauxhall Vectra

EXECUTIVES

CHEAPEST **BMW 5-series, Vauxhall Omega**
MOST EXPENSIVE BMW 7-series, Lexus GS300

MPVS

CHEAPEST **Toyota Picnic**
MOST EXPENSIVE Renault Espace

OFF-ROADERS

CHEAPEST **Suzuki Vitara, Honda CR-V, Toyota RAV4**
MOST EXPENSIVE Land Rover Discovery, Land Rover Range Rover

We rated each of the current models featured in *Which? Car* for running costs. We assumed you buy the car from new, keep it for three years and drive 12,000 miles a year. Cars were compared with others in the same class. Costs vary across a model range, so in the car summaries (which start on p31) we've given a typical running cost rating, from very low to very high.

The ratings are based on the following factors.

Fuel consumption We used the official 'combined' fuel economy figures as published by the Vehicle Certification Agency. We've also used the latest figures on petrol and diesel costs from the AA's national fuel survey.

Annual road tax This is based on the new banding system using official fuel economy figures.

Insurance We used typical quotes from an insurance database.

Servicing and repair costs We checked the manufacturers' official service schedules, and asked several dealers for labour charges.

Depreciation Experts predict the likely future resale values of cars.

Finance costs These are based on using your savings to buy the car outright. Lost interest is calculated assuming you keep the money in a *Which?* Best Buy savings account.

First look

Some recently launched, or less popular cars, weren't around in high enough numbers for us to include them in our main car summaries. To give you an idea of what they're like, we asked ten owners of each model for their opinions

FIAT MULTIPLA

LIST PRICE RANGE £12,815 to £15,715
SIZE (lxw) 3.99m x 2.13m including mirrors
ENGINE SIZES 1.6 petrol, 1.9 diesel
FUEL CONSUMPTION 32.8mpg to 44.1mpg
FIAT RELIABILITY Poor

Most owners bought the quirky-looking Multipla for its innovative features.

INTERIOR As well as being practical and roomy, unusually, it has two rows of three seats. Extra width gives the Multipla good boot space, and the width doesn't seem to be much of a problem when parking.

Large windows and a high driving position give excellent visibility, though some found the headrests caused blindspots.

CONTROLS Owners soon got used to the dashboard-mounted gear lever and the handbrake positioned to the right of the driver. One shorter owner thought that the gear lever's position was 'very comfortable' and 'better than on most cars'.

PERFORMANCE Some found the Multipla faster than they had expected, but others were disappointed by the lack of power at low revs.

Owners said the car was manoeuvrable and had good ride comfort.

FAULTS Faults reported by owners included loose door seals, an oil leak, a faulty seat belt runner, a gearbox leak, and tyre problems.

TOYOTA YARIS VERSO

LIST PRICE RANGE £10,550 to £12,050
SIZE (lxw) 3.86m x 1.92m including mirrors
ENGINE SIZES 1.3 petrol
FUEL CONSUMPTION 40.9mpg, 44.1mpg
TOYOTA RELIABILITY Very good

Despite its compact dimensions, owners were impressed with the space inside the Verso.

INTERIOR Headroom and legroom are good, and there's plenty of stowage for odds and ends.

Drivers also liked the rear seats that can be folded flat to become part of the floor, and the unusual boot door, which opens to the right rather than upwards. Visibility is excellent, and parking is easy, thanks to large windows, the car's height and the squared-off rear end.

CONTROLS The steering and handling are positive, and the car has a small turning circle.

Drivers found the digital display (which shows the speed, fuel gauge and revs) easy to read.

PERFORMANCE The drivers' views on the 1.3-litre engine were mixed – some found the Verso's acceleration adequate, but others felt it was a bit underpowered at low revs.

FAULTS We've had no reports of major problems with the Verso.

CHRYSLER PT CRUISER

LIST PRICE RANGE £14,815 to £18,015
SIZE (lxw) 4.29m x 2.01m including mirrors
ENGINE SIZES 2.0 petrol
FUEL CONSUMPTION 32.5mpg
CHRYSLER RELIABILITY Average

The hot-rod looks hide a versatile small MPV. Most of the owners we interviewed bought the car because of its looks and all reported finding an admiring audience on returning to their parked cars.

INTERIOR All the owners appreciated the space and the versatility of the seating. There's room for five adults and the rear seats can be removed for extra luggage space.

The PT Cruiser's rear window restricts visibility, and this is made worse by the rear headrests.

CONTROLS The Chrysler is manoeuvrable and handles well. The driving position seemed to suit all, and most loved the interior styling. However, some switches are poorly placed.

PERFORMANCE Several drivers thought that the suspension was too firm, and others criticised the 2.0-litre engine for being underpowered. Half the owners found the car noisy.

FAULTS Owners reported a few niggling problems, including a broken CD changer, a faulty diagnostic dashboard light, electrical problems and a broken cruise control.

MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS

LIST PRICE RANGE £20,960 to £31,470
SIZE (lxw) 4.53m x 1.73m
ENGINE SIZES 2.0, 2.6 or 3.2 petrol, 2.1 or 2.7 diesel
FUEL CONSUMPTION 26.2 to 45.6mpg
MERCEDES-BENZ RELIABILITY Very good

The technically advanced C-class was praised by all the owners we spoke to.
INTERIOR Drivers thought there was plenty of front legroom, and sufficient in the back, and they appreciated the amount of adjustment on the front seats.

The well designed boot allows easy loading (and a split rear seat is an option). Most owners praised the visibility, though some thought the front- and rear-door pillars were fairly thick.
CONTROLS Two owners have the optional parking sensor, and they thought this was useful. Other helpful gadgets include headlights and wipers that come on automatically, and cruise control. Some owners were baffled by the on-board computer.
PERFORMANCE Owners enthused about performance and handling, and described the ride as firm but comfortable. It cruises quietly on motorways.
FAULTS A few minor rattles.

SEAT LEON

Many owners were impressed with the Leon's value for money, compared with its Audi and VW stablemates.
INTERIOR Sharing components with the Audi A3 and VW Golf, the Leon feels similar inside. Side airbags and power steering are standard and most models come with air-conditioning or climate control.

Owners found the Leon's seats very comfortable, and most said they liked the ride. Although there's plenty of space in the front, opinion was divided on the rear space. Boot space is good, due to the Leon's body shape, but the high rear end can hamper visibility.
CONTROLS Most drivers easily found a comfortable driving position, and liked the instruments and displays.
PERFORMANCE The petrol engines perform well. But more of a surprise, perhaps, was the 1.9-litre diesel, which owners said provided good acceleration and fuel economy.
FAULTS Two owners reported minor problems with windscreen wipers and central locking.

LIST PRICE RANGE £9,815 to £14,815
SIZE (lxw) 4.18m x 1.96m including mirrors
ENGINE SIZES 1.4, 1.6 or 1.8 petrol, 1.9 diesel
FUEL CONSUMPTION 31.7mpg to 54.3mpg
SEAT RELIABILITY Good

VW BEETLE

LIST PRICE RANGE £12,215 to £16,815
SIZE (lxw) 4.08m x 1.84m including mirrors
ENGINE SIZES 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 petrol
FUEL CONSUMPTION 23.0mpg to 36.7mpg
VW RELIABILITY Good

Not surprisingly, the Beetle's stylish looks were its key attraction.
INTERIOR Owners found the front seats firm and comfortable, and it was easy to find a good driving position. There's ample room in the front but the back seats are cramped. The boot is big enough for shopping runs but it can't fit a large suitcase.

The car's large windows and mirrors give drivers good visibility, though the rear headrests can get in the way when reversing.
CONTROLS Despite power steering and a tight turning circle, four owners found that the shape of the bonnet and boot made it tricky to park.
PERFORMANCE Owners loved the Golf GTi-derived engine, which is helped in slippery conditions by an electronic stability system.
FAULTS An oil pressure warning light failed, and engine trouble developed after driving through a deep puddle.

VAUXHALL AGILA

Getting in and out of the Agila is very easy – a boon for older people and those with mobility problems.
INTERIOR The diminutive Vauxhall, with its high roof and large windows, gives good visibility and a feeling of spaciousness. Although described as plasticky, the interior includes a lot of innovative storage. Owners thought that the tall, but narrow, boot space was adequate for their needs. The firm, comfortable upright seats were liked by all.
CONTROLS The Agila's instruments weren't universally liked, with some owners saying they were partly hidden and difficult to read.
PERFORMANCE The Agila comes with only two engine options. Drivers of the 1.0-litre said it was slow, whereas owners of the 1.2-litre reported better performance around town and on motorways. Plenty of gear changes are needed on hills.
FAULTS Minor problems have forced half the owners to take their cars back to the dealer.

LIST PRICE RANGE £6,850 to £7,305
SIZE (lxw) 3.51m x 1.91m including mirrors
ENGINE SIZES 1.0 or 1.2 petrol
FUEL CONSUMPTION 43.5mpg to 44.8mpg
VAUXHALL RELIABILITY Poor

NISSAN ALMERA TINO

Nissan's answer to the Renault Scénic is a practical and comfortable car.
INTERIOR It's roomy inside, with plenty of legroom. But half the owners said it was tricky to remove or fold the back seats. Some were also slightly disappointed with the boot size, though most praised clever cabin storage compartments.

The high driving position (which is easily adjusted) gives excellent forward visibility, though some owners found rear visibility poor.
CONTROLS Handling and steering were both widely praised, as was the Tino's firm but comfortable ride.

Drivers reported that windscreen wipers left parts of the screen unswept.
PERFORMANCE Owners of the 1.8-litre version thought it was good to drive and responsive, but a bit thirsty. The 2.2-litre diesel and automatic-only 2-litre petrol models gave satisfactory performance.
FAULTS The Tino has had a few niggles, with most owners having to seek minor repairs from the dealer.

LIST PRICE RANGE £12,720 to £16,620
SIZE (lxw) 4.26m x 2.01m including mirrors
ENGINE SIZES 1.8 or 2.0 petrol, 2.2 diesel
FUEL CONSUMPTION 30.4mpg to 44.1mpg
NISSAN RELIABILITY Very good

How to read a summary

The car summaries are full of facts to help you choose a better car. Here's how to get the best from them

The detailed information in our 140 car summaries is based on the results of our survey. First, we give owners' verdicts on their cars. They rated their cars on a range of day-to-day aspects, covering driving ease and pleasure, space for people and luggage, seat and ride comfort, noise, as well as the cost of servicing.

Second, we give crucial reliability information about each car's record for breakdowns and problems.

Executive

BEST BUY

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0, 2.3, 2.4, 2.8, 3.2 or 4.3 litre petrol, 2.2, 2.5, 3.0 or 3.2 litre diesel
Prices new
£23,860 (E200) to £40,660 (E430 estate)
Dimensions
4.80m x 2.01m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Mercedes-Benz E-class

from OCT 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (estate), ride quality, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Poor servicing costs (petrol)
Very poor cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Diesel

newest	recent	older
○	○	
○	○	
○	○	

Newest none
Recent lights/light units, electric windows

CAR CLASS

To help you compare cars of a similar type, we group each model into one of eight classes, from superminis to executives. For more about our car classes, see 'Best Buys', p4.

Those models which have been discontinued, and are no longer available new, have a 'used only' label – the car's production dates appear under the name.

RANGE AVAILABLE AND RUNNING COSTS

Body styles shows whether the car is available as a hatchback, saloon or estate, for example.
Engines tells you which sizes of petrol and diesel engine are available.
Prices gives the range of list prices for each car (for current models) and, for used-only models, a rough idea of how much you'll have to pay.
Dimensions (length by width) are for the smallest car in the range. For details about how we worked out the **running cost** ratings for cars available new, see 'Car running costs', p26.

OWNERS' VERDICTS

We asked car owners to rate more than 50 aspects of their car. We then analysed all the owners' ratings for each model and picked out those aspects which were rated better than average (very good or good) or worse than average (poor or very poor). To make a fair comparison between models, we compared each car only with others in the same class. So, for example, a supermini's ratings were compared with all other superminis'. Small MPVs were compared with small cars. Where particular aspects of a car are not listed in its summary, it means they were rated as average. To find out which cars were liked the most, see 'Readers rate their cars', p18.

RELIABILITY AND TROUBLESPOTS

Our reliability ratings come from our survey of members – see p15 for more details about the survey and our results. We've divided the cars into three age groups: **Newest** were first registered between 1999 and 2001; **Recent** between 1996 and 1998; and **Older** between 1993 and 1995. In each age group, cars' breakdowns, problems and faults are rated as:

★ better than average
○ average
● worse than average

The troublespots are those that appeared most frequently in our survey. Where there are no ratings or troublespots, it's either because the car wasn't built at that time, or because there were too few models of this age in our survey.

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6,1.8, 2.0 or 2.5 litre petrol, 2.4 litre diesel
Prices new
£13,495 (1.6) to £23,584 (2.5 Q-system estate)
Dimensions
4.43m x 1.75m
Running costs
average

Alfa Romeo 156

from JAN 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good gear change, driving pleasure, styling, interior design
Good steering, stability at speed, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, getting in and out, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, engine noise, headlights
Poor rear headroom, ease of loading (saloon), rear view, fuel consumption
Very poor rear legroom, internal storage space, boot space (saloon), insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Executive Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.8, 2.0, 2.2, 2.6 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £17,000
Dimensions
4.80m x 1.78m

Audi 100/A6

from MARCH 1991 to MAY 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption
Good gear change, internal storage space
Poor driving seat adjustment, seat belt comfort, ease of parking, mirrors, windscreen wipers, heating adjustment, servicing costs
Very poor insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	○
Faults		●	○

Recent none
Older none

Family Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr cabriolet, 3-dr coupé
Engines
1.6, 2.0, 2.2, 2.6 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £15,000
Dimensions
4.50m x 1.70m

Audi 80/Cabriolet

from NOV 1991 to SEPT 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)
Good front view, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Poor front headroom, ventilation
Very poor rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, engine noise (diesel), fuel consumption (petrol), cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs (petrol), insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○			○
Problems			○			○
Faults			○			○

Diesel

Older none

Small

WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£14,425 (1.6) to £24,590 (1.8 S3 Quattro)
Dimensions
4.15m x 1.85m inc mirrors
Running costs
very high

Audi A3

from SEPT 1996

Owners' verdicts

Very good driving pleasure, internal storage space, engine noise, noise, ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, front legroom, front headroom, boot space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, wipers, heating, heating adjustment, air conditioning
Poor rear headroom
Very poor rear legroom, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	★	

Newest none
Recent none

Family | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.4, 2.6, 2.8, or 3.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
around £6,300 to £33,000
Dimensions
4.48m x 1.85m inc mirrors

Audi A4

from MARCH 1995 to NOV 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good quality of trim and fittings, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, rear view, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, rattles/squeaks
Poor front legroom, rear head/shoulder room, storage space, loading, ease of DIY, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor rear legroom, boot space (estate), cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	●		○	○	
Problems	○	○		○	○	
Faults	○	○		○	○	

Diesel

Newest none
Recent main engine components (diesel), engine electrics (petrol), battery, suspension

Executive

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.8, 2.4, 2.7, 2.8, or 4.2 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new
£20,585 (1.9 TDi) to £45,835 (4.2 Quattro est)
Dimensions
4.80m x 1.90m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Audi A6

from MAY 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good internal storage space, boot space (saloon), fuel consumption (diesel)
Good clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, front legroom, front headroom, rear legroom, rear headroom, ease of loading (saloon), heating adjustment, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Poor driver's seat support
Very poor engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	●	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none
Recent heating/ventilation

Family | Used only

Body styles
2-dr coupé/conv, 3-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6 to 2.8 litre petrol, 1.7 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £27,000
Dimensions
4.32m x 1.65m

BMW 3-series

from APRIL 1991 to AUG 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of parking
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gears, performance, driver's seat, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Poor front leg- and headroom, getting in/out, storage, ease of loading, ease of DIY
Very poor rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, boot space, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	○	○

Newest none
Recent central locking
Older electric windows, suspension

Family

WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
2-dr coupé/conv, 3-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr est
Engines
1.9, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8 or 3.0 litre petrol, 2.0 or 2.9 litre dsl
Prices new
£13,970 (316 Compact) to £32,160 (330 Ci conv)
Dimensions
4.47m x 1.93m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

BMW 3-series

from SEPT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of parking, engine noise, noise, rear view, headlights, ventilation, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, wipers, heating, heating adjustment, air conditioning, styling, fuel consumption
Poor rear legroom, loading (saloon), replacement parts, insurance costs
Very poor boot space (saloon)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest cooling system

Executive | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.8, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0 or 4.0 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
around £4,000 to £13,000
Dimensions
4.72m x 1.75m

BMW 5-series

from MARCH 1988 to APRIL 1996

Owners' verdicts

Poor driver's seat support, driving position, seat belt comfort, front legroom, front headroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (saloon), seat comfort, mirrors, windscreen wipers, headlights, ventilation

Very poor driving seat adjustment, rear legroom, heating, heating adjustment, air conditioning, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○
Problems			○
Faults			○

Older none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Executive

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.2, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5 or 4.4 litre petrol, 2.5 or 2.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£23,180 (520i 4-d) to £42,320 (540i Sport est)
Dimensions
4.78m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

BMW 5-series

from APRIL 1996

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)

Good stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, ride quality, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption (petrol)

Poor driving seat adjustment, rear legroom, rear head-/shoulder room, boot space, ease of loading (saloon), cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs (petrol)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	●	
Faults	○	●	

Newest none
Recent heating/ventilation

Executive

Body styles
4-dr saloon
Engines
2.8, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.4, 5.0 or 5.4 litre petrol
Prices new
£37,370 (728i) to £75,400 (750i L)
Dimensions
4.98m x 2.06m inc mirrors
Running costs
very high

BMW 7-series

from AUG 1994

Owners' verdicts

Very good internal storage space, rear view

Good brakes, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, boot space (saloon), ease of loading (saloon), ride quality on corners, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, ventilation, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Very poor servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

Sports

Body styles
2-dr coupé, 2-dr convertible
Engines
1.9, 2.0, 2.2, 2.8, 3.0 or 3.2 litre petrol
Prices new
£18,810 (1.9 Roadster) to £35,820 (3.2 M)
Dimensions
4.05m x 1.74m inc mirrors

BMW Z3

from JAN 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good driving seat adjustment, engine noise

Good brakes, windscreen wipers, headlights, ventilation, quality of trim and fittings

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but BMWs overall are average for reliability

MPV | Used only

Body styles
MPV with 5 or 7 seats
Engines
2.0 or 3.3 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
around £11,500 to £20,700
Dimensions
4.73m x 2.24m inc mirrors

Chrysler Voyager

from MARCH 1997 to FEB 2001

Owners' verdicts

Very good boot space
Good driving seat adjustment, seat belt comfort, headroom in middle row, shoulder room in middle row, getting in and out, internal storage space, seat comfort, engine noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, heating, fresh air ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings
Poor servicing costs
Very poor brakes, fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

Supermini

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.0, 1.1, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.5 litre diesel
Prices new
£5,815 (First 3-dr) to £11,615 (16v 3-dr)
Dimensions
3.72m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Citroën Saxo

from MAY 1996

Owners' verdicts

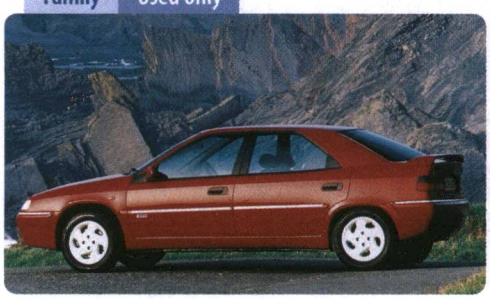
Good boot space, rear view
Poor driving seat adjustment, front legroom, front headroom, rear legroom, rear headroom
Very poor brakes

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none
Recent none

Family | Used only



Body styles
5-dr hatch and estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 3.0 litre petrol, 1.9, 2.0 or 2.1 litre diesel
Prices used
around £2,500 to £12,000
Dimensions
4.44m x 1.98m inc mirrors

Citroën Xantia

from MAY 1993 to OCT 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel), rear legroom
Good steering, front headroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, boot space (estate), ease of loading (estate), ride quality, seat comfort
Poor brakes, gear change, overall performance (petrol), instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of parking, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), headlights, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, quality of trim and fittings, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs (petrol), fuel consumption (petrol), heating
Very poor ease of DIY, changing tyre

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	●
Faults		○	●

Diesel	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	●
Problems	○	●	●
Faults	○	●	●

Newest none
Recent fuel system (diesel), alarm/immobiliser (diesel), non-engine electrics, gears/clutch, braking system, suspension
Older fuel system (diesel), battery, braking system, suspension

Small

Body styles
5-dr hatch and est, 2-dr coupé
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.0 litre dsl
Prices new
£9,515 (1.4L 5-dr) to £16,215 (2.0 coupé)
Dimensions
4.17m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Citroën Xsara

from NOV 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good internal storage space, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance (diesel), front headroom, rear legroom, rear headroom, boot space (hatchback), ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, engine noise (petrol), noise, windscreen wipers, styling, rattles and squeaks
Poor front view
Very poor ease of parking, rear view, changing tyre

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	★	

Diesel	newest	recent	older
	○		
	○		
	○		

Newest none
Recent none

Small MPV

WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
Small MPV with 5 seats
Engines
1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£12,615 (LX) to £14,315 (Hdi SX)
Dimensions
4.28m x 1.75m
Running costs
average

Citroën Xsara Picasso

from JUNE 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good front headroom, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, engine noise, noise, windscreen wipers, interior design

Good brakes, clutch, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, driving pleasure, front legroom, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, rear view, headlights, styling, fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used
Up to around £5,300
Dimensions
4.06m x 1.70m

Citroën ZX

from JUNE 1991 to NOV 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)

Good ease of loading (estate)

Poor steering, brakes, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front legroom, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space, ease of folding rear seats, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, headlights, heating, ventilation, quality of fittings, rattles and squeaks

Very poor removing rear seats, engine noise, wipers, styling, interior design, ease of DIY, changing tyre, cost of replacement parts (petrol)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○
Problems			○
Faults			○

Diesel

newest	recent	older
	○	○
	○	○
	●	○

Recent engine electrics, lights/light units, braking system

Older exhaust or emission control system (petrol), braking system, suspension, interior equipment

Small

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines
1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol
Prices new
£7,315 (S) to £9,815 (SX)
Dimensions
4.07m x 1.85m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Daewoo Lanos

from SEPT 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good servicing costs

Good ease of parking, insurance costs

Poor driving position, position of switches and controls, boot space (hatchback), seat comfort, noise, interior design, fuel consumption

Very poor internal storage space, quality of trim and fittings

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£12,315 (SX) to £14,815 (CDX-E)
Dimensions
4.67m x 2.06m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Daewoo Leganza

from SEPT 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good driving seat adjustment, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, rear view, insurance costs

Good driving position, ease of parking, front legroom, getting in and out, boot space (saloon), seat comfort, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation air conditioning, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Daewoos overall are average for reliability

Supermini

Body styles
5-dr hatchback
Engines
0.8 litre petrol
Prices new
£6,470 (SE) to £7,570 (SE+)
Dimensions
3.50m x 1.87m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Daewoo Matiz

from AUG 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good steering, ease of parking, front headroom, rear legroom/headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, seat comfort, rear view, ease of DIY, changing tyre, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs
Good clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on straight, noise, mirrors,wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks
Very poor boot space

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Small Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines
1.5 litre petrol
Prices used
around £1,800 to £2,900
Dimensions
4.28m x 1.82m inc mirrors

Daewoo Nexia

from APRIL 1995 to SEPT 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good insurance costs
Poor brakes, overall performance, driving position, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, front headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, noise, headlights
Very poor stability at speed, driver's seat support, instrument visibility, driving pleasure, front legroom, rear legroom, internal storage space, ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, windscreen wipers, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		●	

Recent none

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£10,815 (SE 4-dr) to £13,690 (CDX est 4-dr Auto)
Dimensions
4.47m x 1.97m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Daewoo Nubira

from SEPT 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good servicing costs, insurance costs
Good ease of parking, rear view
Poor driver's seat support, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, styling, driving pleasure, quality of trim and fittings
Very poor fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Daewoos overall are average for reliability

Small

Body styles
3-dr hatchback (Bravo), 5-dr hatchback (Brava)
Engines
1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£10,214 (1.2 SX) to £12,214 (JTD 100 ELX)
Dimensions
4.19m x 1.94m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Fiat Brava/Bravo

from DEC 1995

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, styling
Poor overall performance, seat belt comfort, ease of parking, rear headroom, internal storage space, ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, wipers, headlights, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, changing tyre
Very poor ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	●	
Faults	○	●	

Newest none
Recent fuel system, washers/wipers

Supermini | Used only

Body styles
3-dr hatchback
Engines
0.9 or 1.1 litre petrol
Prices used
around £1,500 to £3,500
Dimensions
3.23m x 1.76m inc mirrors

Fiat Cinquecento

from MAY 1993 to JUNE 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good insurance costs
Good ease of parking, fuel consumption
Poor stability at speed, clutch, driver's seat support, driving position, ease of driving, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, heating adjustment, ventilation, styling, interior design
Very poor steering, brakes, gear change, overall performance, position of switches and controls, rear legroom, boot space, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		●	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent fuel system

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Supermini | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 2-dr convertible
Engines
1.1, 1.2, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.7 diesel
Prices used
around £2,100 to £8,900
Dimensions
3.76m x 1.88m inc mirrors

Fiat Punto

from MARCH 1994 to SEPT 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, rear headroom, boot space
Good front legroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, ease of loading, styling
Poor stability at speed, brakes, clutch, overall performance, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, ride quality on straight, ride quality on corners, engine noise, noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Very poor steering, gear change

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	●
Problems	○	○	●
Faults	○	●	●

Newest none
Recent exhaust or emission control system, braking system
Older main engine components

Supermini

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.2 or 1.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£7,397 (1.2 3-dr) to £13,216 (1.8 HGT 3-dr)
Dimensions
3.80m x 1.80m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Fiat Punto

from OCT 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good steering, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, boot space, engine noise, styling
Good overall performance, driving seat adjustment, driving position, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, getting in and out, ease of loading, windscreen wipers, headlights, interior design, fuel consumption
Poor rear view, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.7 or 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used
around £1,200 to £2,000
Dimensions
3.96m x 1.98m inc mirrors

Fiat Tipo

from JUNE 1988 to OCT 1995

Owners' verdicts

Poor brakes, clutch, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, engine noise, rattles and squeaks
Very poor overall performance, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○
Problems			○
Faults			○

Older none

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr convertable
Engines
1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.8 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £13,000
Dimensions
4.04m x 1.86m inc mirrors

Ford Escort/Orion

from SEPT 1990 to JULY 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts, fuel consumption (diesel), servicing costs (dsl)
Good boot space (hatchback),ventilation, servicing costs (petrol)
Poor steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gears, overall performance, driver's seat, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in/out, storage, loading, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating/air conditioning, styling/interior design, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

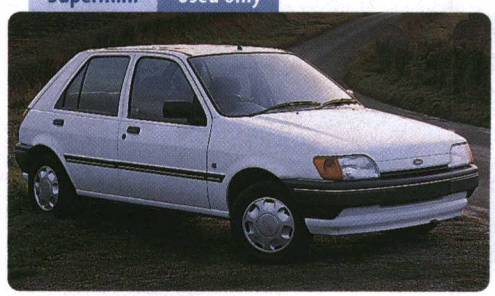
	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	●
Problems	○	★	●
Faults	○	○	○

Diesel

newest	recent	older
	○	●
	○	○
●		○

Recent main engine components (diesel), washer/wipers, fuel system (diesel), battery, gears/clutch, braking system, steering, exterior
Older cam belt/timing belt, fuel system (diesel), engine electrics (petrol), dashboard switches/control stalks, heating/ventilation, braking system, exterior

Supermini | Used only



Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 1.8 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £4,000
Dimensions
3.73m x 1.85m inc mirrors

Ford Fiesta

from AUG 1991 to SEPT 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts
Good servicing costs
Poor stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, performance, driver's seat and position, instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, loading, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Very poor steering, driving pleasure, engine noise, air conditioning, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			●
Problems			○
Faults			○

Older engine electrics, steering, handles/locks, exterior, rust

Supermini

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.25, 1.3, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.8 litre diesel
Prices new
£6,850 (1.3 Fun) to £11,815 (Ghia)
Dimensions
3.83m x 1.80m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Ford Fiesta

from OCT 1995

Owners' verdicts

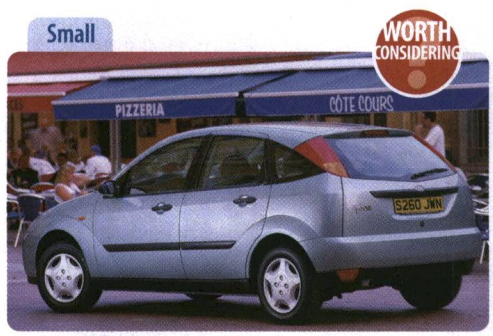
Very good cost of replacement parts
Good stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, ride quality on corners, headlights, heating, servicing costs (petrol) engine noise (petrol)
Poor driving seat adjustment, instrument visibility, front/rear headroom, rear legroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, quality of trim and fittings, fuel consumption (petrol), insurance costs
Very poor changing tyre, engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	
Problems	★	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest interior equipment
Recent washers/wipers, braking system, rainwater seals, rust

Small



Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.8 diesel
Prices new
£10,315 to £15,065 (Ghia estate)
Dimensions
4.15m x 2.00m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Ford Focus

from OCT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, getting in and out, cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs, insurance costs, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, performance (petrol), driver's seat and position, instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, storage, loading, boot space, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim/fittings, rattles/squeaks, DIY, changing tyre
Poor boot space (hatchback), ease of folding rear seats (estate)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Diesel

newest	recent	older
○		
○		
○		

Newest engine electrics (petrol), heating/ventilation

MPV

Body styles
MPV with 5, 6 or 7 seats
Engines
2.0, 2.3 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£18,065 (LX) to £25,065 (Ghia Auto)
Dimensions
4.62m x 2.15m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Ford Galaxy

from JUNE 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts, fuel consumption (diesel), servicing costs (diesel)
Good clutch, gear change, front legroom, ride quality on straight, overall performance (diesel)
Poor ease of parking, boot space, mirrors, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, heating, quality of trim and fittings, engine noise (diesel)
Very poor changing tyre, fuel consumption (petrol)

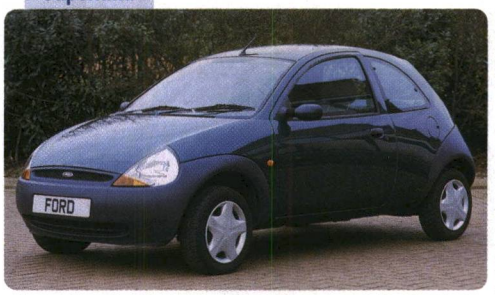
Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	●	
Problems	●	●	
Faults	●	●	

Newest non-engine electrics
Recent engine electrics (petrol), lights/light units, heating/ventilation, interior equipment

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Supermini



Body styles
3-dr hatchback
Engines
1.3 litre petrol
Prices new
£6,815 to £7,315 (Style Pack)
Dimensions
3.62m x 1.83m
Running costs
average

Ford Ka

from SEPT 1996

Owners' verdicts

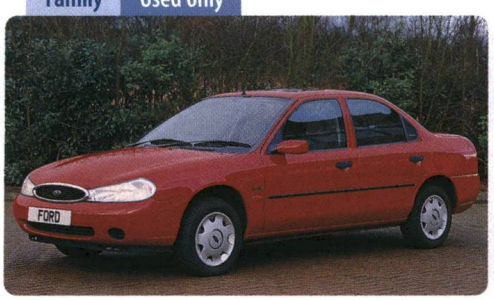
Very good steering, styling, cost of replacement parts
Good stability at speed, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, ride quality, heating, interior design, servicing costs, insurance costs
Poor seat belt comfort, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of loading, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers
Very poor rear legroom, boot space, changing tyre

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	
Problems	★	★	
Faults	★	★	

Newest none
Recent none

Family Used only



Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.5 litre petrol, 1.8 or 2.0 litre dsl
Prices used
around £2,100 to £15,000
Dimensions
4.48m x 1.95m inc mirrors

Ford Mondeo

from FEB 1993 to OCT 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good front headroom, storage, boot space, ease of loading (saloon), ease of loading (estate), ease of folding rear seats (estate), insurance costs
Poor steering, stability at speed, brakes, performance, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, position of switches/controls, seat belt, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, rear shoulder room, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, int. design, quality of trim/fittings, rattles/squeaks, fuel consumption (ptl)
Very poor engine noise (diesel)

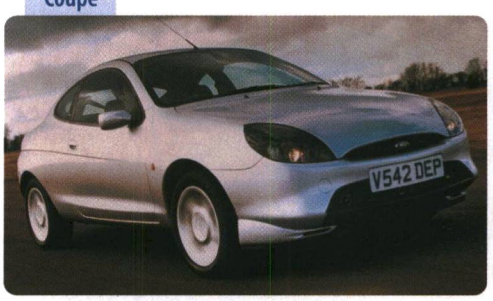
Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	○
Problems	○	○	●
Faults	○	○	●

Diesel	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	○	●
Faults	○	○	●

Recent engine components (diesel), cam/timing belt, heating/ventilation, seat belts, suspension,fuel system (diesel), engine electrics (diesel), non-engine electrics
Older cam/timing belt (ptl), engine components (dsl), exhaust or emission control (ptl), engine electrics (ptl), suspension, fuel system (dsl), non-engine electrics

Coupé



Body styles
3-dr coupé
Engines
1.6 or 1.7 litre petrol
Prices new
£12,115 (1.6) to £13,815 (1.7)
Dimensions
3.98m x 1.84m inc mirrors

Ford Puma

from JUNE 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of DIY, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs
Good steering, stability at speed, gear change, overall performance, driving pleasure, getting in and out, ride quality on corners, heating, ventilation, interior design, fuel consumption
Poor ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, mirrors, front view, wipers
Very poor rear headroom, rear shoulder room, rear view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none
Recent none

Executive | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0, 2.3 or 2.9 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
around £3,900 to £10,200
Dimensions
4.83m x 1.89m inc mirrors

Ford Scorpio

from JAN 1995 to JUNE 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Good steering, driving seat adjustment, driving position, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, seat comfort, insurance costs
Poor quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre
Very poor styling

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	○
Faults		○	○

Recent steering
Older none

Family | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé
Engines
1.8, 2.0 or 2.2 litre petrol
Prices used
around £2,800 to £18,100
Dimensions
4.69m x 1.96m inc mirrors

Honda Accord

from APRIL 1993 to JUNE 1998

Owners' verdicts

Good stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, ride quality on straight, mirrors, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Poor ease of parking, front/rear headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (saloon), ease of loading (saloon), ventilation, ease of DIY
Very poor fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	★
Problems		○	○
Faults		○	○

Recent exhaust or emission control system
Older exhaust or emission control system

Family

BEST BUY

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 2-dr coupé
Engines
1.8, 2.0, 2.2 or 3.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£14,315 (1.8 4-dr) to £22,265 (2.2 4-dr)
Dimensions
4.60m x 1.93m inc mirrors
Running costs
Average

Honda Accord

from JULY 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), engine noise, changing tyre
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, boot space, ease of loading, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, insurance costs
Very poor fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	★		
Faults	★		

Newest none

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 2-dr coupé
Engines
1.3, 1.5 or 1.6 litre petrol
Prices used
up to around £7,400
Dimensions
4.32m x 1.91m inc mirrors

Honda Civic

from NOV 1991 to FEB 1995

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, overall performance, styling, changing tyre
Poor rear legroom, heating adjustment
Very poor getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○
Problems			★
Faults			○

Older exhaust or emission control system

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé
Engines
1.4, 1.5, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used
around £5,200 to £11,900
Dimensions
4.19m x 1.92m inc mirrors

Honda Civic

from MARCH 1995 to DEC 2000

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, rear shoulder room, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, heating adjustment, ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre
Poor getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (saloon), rear view, insurance costs
Very poor cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	★	★	★
Problems	★	★	★
Faults	★	★	○

Newest none
Recent exhaust or emission control system
Older exhaust or emission control system

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Off-roader

WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
5-dr estate
Engines
2.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£16,315 (LS) to £20,110 (ES Exec Auto)
Dimensions
4.52m x 1.75m
Running costs
low

Honda CR-V

from JUNE 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good gear change, rear legroom, getting in/out, engine noise, rear view, rattles/squeaks, ease of DIY, changing tyre, cost of replacement parts/servicing
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, storage, boot space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on corners, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, quality of trim and fittings, fuel consumption, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	★	○	
Problems	★	★	
Faults	★	★	

Newest none
Recent none

MPV

AUTO EXPRESS

Body styles
MPV with 6 or 7 seats
Engines
2.2 or 2.3 litre petrol
Prices new
£18,125 (LS) to £22,440 (ES Exec Auto)
Dimensions
4.75m x 1.79m
Running costs
average

Honda Shuttle

from JULY 1995

Owners' verdicts

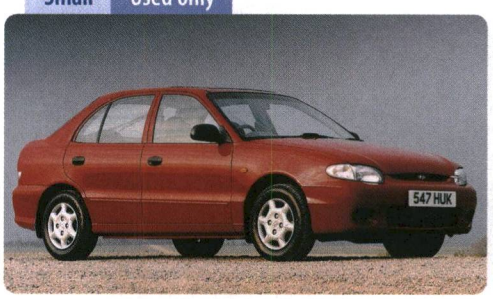
Very good stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, legroom in middle row, shoulder room in middle row, boot space, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, quality of trim and fittings
Good steering, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, headroom in middle row, getting in and out, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, front view, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Hondas overall are very good for reliability

Small | Used only



Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 3-dr coupé
Engines
1.3 or 1.5 litre petrol
Prices used
from around £2,100 to £5,200
Dimensions
4.10m x 1.86m inc mirrors

Hyundai Accent

from OCT 1994 to DEC 1999

Owners' verdicts

Good insurance costs
Poor steering, overall performance, seat belt comfort, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality, seat comfort, ventilation, interior design, rattles and squeaks
Very poor stability at speed, gear change, position of switches and controls, getting in and out, internal storage space, quality of trim and fittings

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	★	○	

Newest none
Recent none

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.5, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£10,834 (1.6 Si) to £14,668 (2.0 CDX auto)
Dimensions
4.42m x 1.70m
Running costs
low

Hyundai Lantra/Elantra

from NOV 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of parking, rear view, insurance costs
Good clutch, front view
Poor gear change, quality of trim and fittings, noise

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

Executive

Body styles
4-dr saloon
Engines
3.0 or 4.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£26,520 (3.0 V6 Saloon) to £38,220 (4.0 V8 Auto)
Dimensions
4.86m x 2.04m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Jaguar S-type

from OCT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good styling, servicing costs, insurance costs
Good brakes, driving seat adjustment, driving position, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, engine noise, headlights, heating, interior design
Poor front legroom, rear shoulder room, rear view, fuel consumption
Very poor rear legroom, rear headroom, internal storage space, boot space (saloon)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Executive

Body styles
4-dr saloon
Engines
3.2 or 4.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£35,770 (3.2 Sport) to £51,770 (XJR8)
Dimensions
5.02m x 2.08m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Jaguar XJ Series

from SEPT 1994

Owners' verdicts

Very good interior design
Good steering, overall performance, driving pleasure, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, headlights, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Poor front legroom, front headroom, rear shoulder room, changing tyre, ease of loading
Very poor rear legroom, rear headroom, internal storage space, boot space (saloon), ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		●	○
Problems		○	★
Faults		○	○

Recent none
Older none

Coupé

Body styles
2-dr coupé/convertible
Engines
4.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£48,520 (XK8) to £63,170 (XKR convertible)
Dimensions
4.76m x 2.02m inc mirrors

Jaguar XK8/XKR

from OCT 1996

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear view, headlights, ventilation, rattles and squeaks
Good overall performance, driving seat adjustment, ease of driving, ease of loading, ride quality, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, heating, heating adjustment, air conditioning, interior design, quality of trim and fittings
Very poor fuel consumption, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Jaguars overall are average for reliability

Off-roader | Used only

Body styles
5-dr estate
Engines
2.5 or 4.0 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
around £5,700 to £21,000
Dimensions
4.24m x 1.95m inc mirrors

Jeep Cherokee

from JAN 1993 to AUG 2001

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, stability at speed, driving seat adjustment, ease of parking, rear view, heating

Poor front headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, ease of folding rear seats

Very poor position of switches and controls, rear legroom, rear headroom, internal storage space, headlights, ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Jeeps overall are average for reliability

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Off-roader

Body styles
5-dr estate
Engines
4.0, 4.7, 5.2 or 5.9 litre petrol, 2.5 or 3.1 diesel
Prices new
£27,815 (4.0 Limited) to £30,815 (4.7 Limited)
Dimensions
4.61m x 2.24m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Jeep Grand Cherokee

from JAN 1996

Owners' verdicts

Very good interior design

Good driving seat adjustment, ride quality on straight, engine noise, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, styling, quality of trim and fittings

Very poor fuel consumption, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Jeeps overall are average for reliability

Off-roader

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0, 3.5 or 4.0 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new
£21,815 (2.5 Td5) to £32,760 (4.0 V8i ES)
Dimensions
4.71m x 2.19m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Land Rover Discovery

from NOV 1989

Owners' verdicts

Very good boot space

Good front headroom, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, ease of loading

Poor steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, getting in and out, ride quality, noise, wipers, headlights, heating, styling, quality of trim and fittings, ease of DIY, cost of replacement parts

Very poor ease of parking, engine noise, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

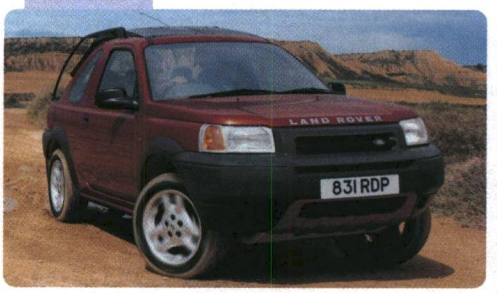
	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	●	○	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	●	●	○

Newest non-engine electrics, suspension

Recent main engine components, fuel system, exhaust or emission control system, cooling system, steering

Older interior equipment, exterior

Off-roader



Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr estate, 3-dr soft-top
Engines
1.8 or 2.5 litre petrol, 2.0 diesel
Prices new
£15,815 (1.8i S) to £24,415 (2.5 V6 ES est)
Dimensions
4.38m x 2.08m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Land Rover Freelander

from OCT 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)

Good stability at speed, rear legroom, ride quality, styling, interior design, insurance costs, cost of replacement parts

Poor instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of parking, front headroom, boot space, front view, heating adjustment, air conditioning, overall performance (petrol)

Very poor rear view, heating, ventilation

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	Diesel: newest	Diesel: recent	Diesel: older
Breakdowns	●	○		○		
Problems	●	○		○		
Faults	●	●		○		

Newest fuel system (petrol), gears/clutch

Recent main engine components, heating/ventilation, gears/clutch, braking system

Off-roader

Body styles
5-dr estate
Engines
4.0 or 4.6 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new
£36,810 (2.5DT) to £49,815 (4.6 Vogue)
Dimensions
4.71m x 2.23m inc mirrors
Running costs
very high

Land Rover Range Rover

from SEPT 1994

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, boot space, engine noise, rear view, interior design
Good stability at speed, driver's seat comfort, driving position, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, styling
Very poor ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		●	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent heating/ventilation

Executive

Body styles
4-dr saloon
Engines
3.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£28,270 (3.0) to £33,280 (3.0 SE Navigator)
Dimensions
4.81m x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Lexus GS300

from OCT 1993

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, stability at speed, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, getting in and out, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, heating, heating adjustment, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Very poor boot space

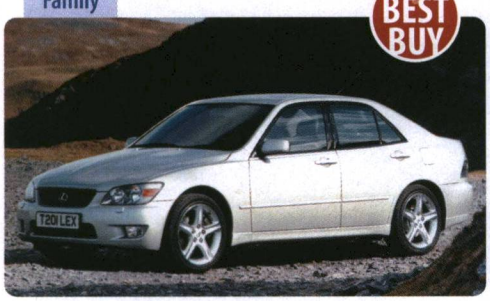
Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Lexus models overall are very good for reliability

Family

BEST BUY



Body styles
4-dr saloon
Engines
2.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£18,200 (2.0 S) to £25,020 (2.0 Sport)
Dimensions
4.40m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Lexus IS200

from MARCH 1999

Owners' verdicts

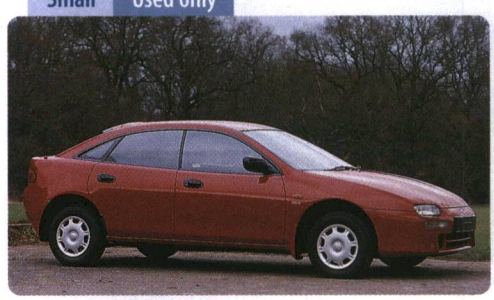
Very good clutch, gear change, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, position of switches and controls, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, servicing costs, insurance costs
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, rear legroom, rear headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, ride quality on straight, front/rear view, instrument visibility, ease of parking

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	★		
Problems	★		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Small Used only



Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines
1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol
Prices used
up to around £7,800
Dimensions
4.24m x 1.89m inc mirrors

Mazda 323

from AUG 1994 to OCT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, gear change, overall performance, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), engine noise, styling, quality of trim and fittings
Poor ease of parking, front/rear headroom, rear legroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), front view, ease of DIY, fuel consumption
Very poor getting in and out, ease of loading (hatchback), rear view, headlights, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	★
Problems		★	○
Faults		○	○

Recent none
Older none

Small

Body styles
5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 diesel
Prices new
£10,615 (1.3 Lxi) to £14,815 (2.0 Sport)
Dimensions
4.24m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Mazda 323

from OCT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, ease of driving, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, mirrors, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	★		
Faults	★		

Newest none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Family | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol
Prices used
around £2,200 to £10,100
Dimensions
4.70m x 1.89m inc mirrors

Mazda 626

from FEB 1992 to JUNE 1997

Owners' verdicts

Good front view
Poor ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality on corners, noise, ease of DIY
Very poor cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○
Problems			○
Faults			○

Older exhaust or emission control system, braking system

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£13,815 (1.8 Lxi) to £16,815 (2.0 GSi)
Dimensions
4.70m x 1.90m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Mazda 626

from JUNE 1997

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, front/rear headroom, rear legroom rear shoulder room, getting in and out, boot space (hatchback), headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning
Poor servicing costs, insurance costs
Very poor rear view, cost of replacement parts

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	
Problems	○	★	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none
Recent none

Sports

Body styles
2-dr convertible
Engines
1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol
Prices new
£14,815 (1.6i) to £17,815(1.8i S)
Dimensions
4.01m x 1.83m inc mirrors

Mazda MX-5

from JAN 1990

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of DIY, insurance costs
Good clutch, gear change, ease of parking, changing tyre, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Poor brakes, driver's seat support, driving position, front legroom, front headroom, getting in and out, interior design
Very poor internal storage space, boot space

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	★	
Faults	★	★	

Newest none
Recent none

Small

Body styles
5-dr hatchback, both short and long wheelbase
Engines
1.4, 1.6 or 1.9 litre petrol, 1.7 litre diesel
Prices new
£12,610 (A140 Classic) to £17,660 (A190)
Dimensions
3.56m x 1.94m inc mirrors
Running costs
very high

Mercedes-Benz A-class

from SEPT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good getting in and out, wipers, quality of trim/fittings, fuel consumption
Good brakes, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, engine noise, noise, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, interior design, rattles and squeaks, insurance costs
Poor stability at speed, ride quality on straight, ride quality on corners
Very poor boot space, cost of replacement parts

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	●		

Newest gears/clutch

Family Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon,5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé
Engines
1.8 to 2.8 litre petrol, 2.2 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
around £6,600 to £25,000
Dimensions
4.48m x 1.96m inc mirrors

Mercedes-Benz C-class

from OCT 1993 to SEPT 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good engine noise (petrol), noise, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance (petrol), instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality, mirrors, front/rear view, windscreen wipers, head lights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, changing tyre, interior design
Poor rear legroom, storage space, boot space, ease of DIY, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	○	★

Newest none
Recent none
Older none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Coupé

Body styles
2-dr coupé or convertible
Engines
2.0, 2.3, 3.2 or 4.3 litre petrol
Prices new
£26,160 (200 coupé) to £44,010 (430 cabriolet)
Dimensions
4.57m x 1.97m inc mirrors

Mercedes-Benz CLK

from JUNE 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, noise, rattles and squeaks
Good stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, front legroom, front headroom, ease of loading, ride quality on straight, front view, headlights, ventilation, interior design, quality of trim and fittings
Poor servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Executive Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé or convertible
Engines
2.0, 2.2, 2.8 or 3.2 litre petrol, 2.5 or 3.0 litre diesel
Prices used
around £5,700 to £20,500
Dimensions
4.75m x 1.80m

Mercedes-Benz E-class

from OCT 1992 to JUNE 1996

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of parking, boot space (saloon), fuel consumption
Good front legroom, front headroom, getting in and out, ease of loading (saloon), ride quality on straight, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating adjustment, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Very poor cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○
Problems			○
Faults			○

Older none

Executive

BEST BUY

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0, 2.3, 2.4, 2.8, 3.2 or 4.3 litre petrol, 2.2, 2.5, 3.0 or 3.2 litre diesel
Prices new
£23,860 (E200) to £40,660 (E430 estate)
Dimensions
4.80m x 2.01m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Mercedes-Benz E-class

from OCT 1995

Owners' verdicts

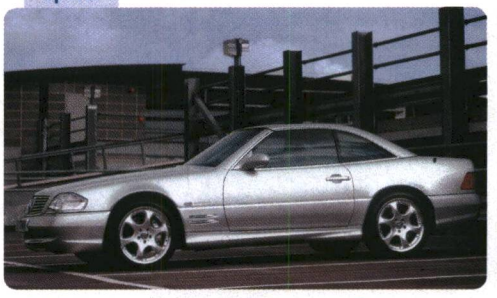
Very good fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (estate), ride quality, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Poor servicing costs (petrol)
Very poor cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	Diesel newest	Diesel recent	Diesel older
Breakdowns	○	○		○	○	
Problems	○	○		○	○	
Faults	○	○		○	○	

Newest none
Recent lights/light units, electric windows

Sports



Body styles
2-dr convertible
Engines
2.8, 3.0, 3.2, 5.0 or 6.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£50,160 (2.8) to £80, 720 (6.0)
Dimensions
4.52m x 1.98m inc mirrors

Mercedes-Benz SL-class

from OCT 1989

Owners' verdicts

Very good getting in and out, internal storage space, engine noise, noise, rear view, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Good stability at speed, brakes, ease of driving, ease of parking, ride quality on straight, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, interior design
Very poor fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Mercedes models overall are very good for reliability

Sports

Body styles
2-dr convertible
Engines
1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol
Prices new
£15,335(1.6) to £20,815(1.8 Trophy)
Dimensions
3.91m x 1.78m inc mirrors

MGF

from SEPT 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs
Good steering, front legroom
Poor driving seat adjustment, noise, mirrors, quality of trim and fittings
Very poor ease of DIY, rear view, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		●	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch
Engines
1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£11,015 (1.6) to £16,800 (1.8 GDI Elegance)
Dimensions
4.48m to 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Mitsubishi Carisma

from OCT 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption
Good rear legroom, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), mirrors, insurance costs
Poor ride quality on straight, noise, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

Off-roader | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr estate
Engines
3.0 or 3.5 litre petrol, 2.5 or 2.8 litre diesel
Prices used
around £6,100 to £23,900
Dimensions
4.15m x 1.79m

Mitsubishi Shogun

from MARCH 1989 to MAY 2001

Owners' verdicts

Good front headroom, seat comfort, quality of trim and fittings
Very poor fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

MPV | Used only

Body styles
MPV with 6 seats
Engines
2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used
around £4,100 to £10,400
Dimensions
4.52m x 1.70m

Mitsubishi Space Wagon

from OCT 1991 to NOV 1998

Owners' verdicts

Good front view, quality of trim and fittings
Poor front legroom, front headroom, rear shoulder room, headroom in middle row, shoulder room in middle row
Very poor rear legroom, legroom in middle row

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Mitsubishis overall are good for reliability

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines
1.4, 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used
Around £3,400 to £8,100
Dimensions
4.12m x 1.92m inc mirrors

Nissan Almera

from OCT 1995 to FEB 2000

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, ease of parking, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), engine noise, noise, mirrors, headlights, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, changing tyre, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs
Poor internal storage space, ease of loading (hatchback), styling, interior design
Very poor boot space (hatchback)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	
Problems	★	★	
Faults	★	★	

Newest none
Recent washers/wipers

Small

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines
1.5 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new
£9,470 (1.5 E) to £14,570 (2.2 TD Sport+)
Dimensions
4.12m x 1.69m
Running costs
average

Nissan Almera

from MARCH 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good brakes, internal storage space, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), seat comfort, engine noise, noise, windscreen wipers, headlights, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Good steering, stability at speed, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, mirrors, front view, rear view, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, quality of trim and fittings

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	★		
Faults	★		

Newest none

Supermini

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.0, 1.3 or 1.4 litre petrol
Prices new
£6,870 (1.0 E) to £11,320 (1.4 SE+)
Dimensions
3.70m x 1.78m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Nissan Micra

from JAN 1993

Owners' verdicts

Very good changing tyre

Good brakes, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front/rear headroom, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on straight, engine noise, noise, mirrors, front/rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Poor storage space, boot space, heating, air conditioning, styling, interior design

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	★
Problems	★	★	★
Faults	★	★	★

Newest none
Recent none
Older none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Family Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used
around £4,100 to £8,400
Dimensions
4.43m x 1.98m inc mirrors

Nissan Primera

from NOV 1996 to AUG 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of DIY

Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front/rear headroom, rear legroom, rear shoulder room, boot space (hatchback), ease of loading (hatchback), ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ride quality on corners, mirrors, headlights, ventilation, changing tyre, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Poor styling, interior design

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	
Problems	★	★	
Faults	○	★	

Newest none
Recent none

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£12,420 (1.6 E) to £18,270 (2.0 SE+ estate)
Dimensions
4.52m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Nissan Primera

from SEPT 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of DIY

Good stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, ease of loading (hatchback), ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ride quality on corners, windscreen wipers, ventilation, rattles and squeaks, cost of replacement parts

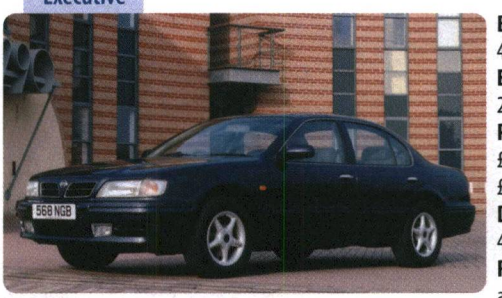
Poor driving seat adjustment, ease of parking, rear view, styling, interior design

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	★		

Newest none

Executive



Body styles
4-dr saloon
Engines
2.0 or 3.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£20,520 (2.0 SE) to £25,720 (3.0 SE+)
Dimensions
4.77m x 2.08m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Nissan QX/Maxima QX

from MARCH 1995

Owners' verdicts

Good rear legroom, rear shoulder room, engine noise, heating,heating adjustment, rattles and squeaks

Very poor styling, fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Nissans overall are very good for reliability

Supermini

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.0, 1.1, 1.3, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.4 or 1.5 litre diesel
Prices new
£6,415 (1.1 Zest 1) to £11,615 (1.6 Gti)
Dimensions
3.65m x 1.89m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Peugeot 106
from SEPT 1991

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)

Poor stability at speed, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, getting in and out, storage space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, engine noise (petrol)

Very poor steering, brakes, rear shoulder room, changing tyre, engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

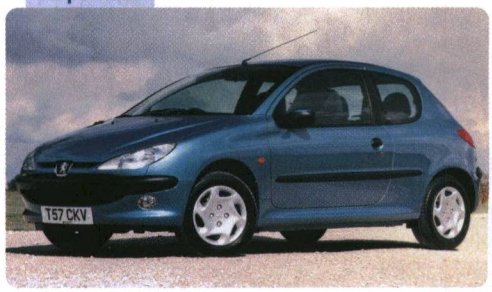
	newest	recent	older	Diesel: newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	★		○	○
Problems	○	★	○		○	○
Faults	★	○	○		○	○

Newest none

Recent none

Older main engine components (diesel), braking system

Supermini



Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 2-dr cabriolet
Engines
1.1, 1.4, 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.0 litre dsl
Prices new
£7,815 (1.1) to £15,815 (2.0 SE coupé cabriolet)
Dimensions
3.84m x 1.88m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Peugeot 206
from OCT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good steering, internal storage space, styling, interior design

Good stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, boot space, ease of loading, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption (diesel)

Poor fuel consumption (petrol)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	Diesel: newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○			○		
Problems	○			○		
Faults	○			○		

Newest audio equipment

Small

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatch, 2-dr cab, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr est
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.0 litre dsl
Prices new
£10,815 (1.4) to £17,965 (1.6 SE cabriolet auto)
Dimensions
4.03m x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Peugeot 306
from APRIL 1993

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)

Good position of switches and controls, ease of parking, ride quality on corners, rear view, insurance costs

Poor steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat, driving position, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, ease of loading, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, headlights, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, overall performance (petrol), fuel consumption (petrol)

Very poor changing tyre, engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	Diesel: newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	○	★	○	○
Problems	○	●	●	○	●	●
Faults	○	●	●	○	●	○

Recent engine electrics (diesel), non-engine electrics, braking system, airbags

Older cylinder head/cylinder head gasket, fuel system (diesel), exhaust or emission control system (petrol), engine electrics (petrol), central locking, washers/wipers, cooling system, gears/clutch, braking system, steering

Family Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 diesel
Prices used
up to around £6,200
Dimensions
4.41m x 2.01m inc mirrors

Peugeot 405
from JAN 1988 to OCT 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel), insurance costs

Good ease of parking, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, boot space (saloon), boot space (estate), ease of loading (estate), rear view, cost of replacement parts (diesel), servicing costs (diesel)

Poor steering, brakes, clutch, overall performance (diesel), driving seat adjustment, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, heating adjustment, air conditioning, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, mirrors, ventilation

Very poor gear change, engine noise (diesel), noise, rattles/squeaks, changing tyre

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	●
Faults		○	●

Recent exhaust or emission control system, engine electrics

Older exhaust or emission control system (petrol),engine electrics (diesel), non-engine electrics, cooling system (diesel), heating/ventilation, gears/clutch, braking system

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé
Engines
1.8, 2.0, 2.2 or 3.0 litre ptl, 1.9, 2.0, 2.1 or 2.2 litre dsl
Prices new
£13,315 (1.8L saloon) to £26,915 (3.0 coupé auto)
Dimensions
4.60m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Peugeot 406

from FEB 1996

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, stability at speed, driving seat adjustment, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (estate), ease of loading (estate), ride quality, mirrors, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, engine noise (petrol)
Poor clutch, gear change, quality of trim and fittings, engine noise (diesel), instrument visibility, ease of parking, headlights
Very poor fuel consumption (petrol)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○		○	○	
Problems	○	○		●	●	
Faults	○	●		●	●	

Diesel

Newest fuel system (diesel), washers/wipers, braking system
Recent electric windows, exhaust or emission control system (petrol), cooling system (diesel), braking system

MPV

Body styles
MPV with 5,6,7 or 8 seats
Engines
2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£17,740 (2.0 LX) to £21,470 (2.0HDi GTX)
Dimensions
4.45m x 2.18m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Peugeot 806

from OCT 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good removing middle/rear seats, fuel consumption
Good driving position, headlights
Poor clutch, shoulder room in middle row, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Very poor rear legroom, legroom in middle

These verdicts are the combined verdicts of Citroën Synergie, Fiat Ulysse and Peugeot 806 owners, because they are essentially the same car, sold under different names

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		●	
Faults		●	

Recent none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Small

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch
Engines
1.3, 1.5, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£7,319 (1.3 Li saloon) to £12,219 (1.8 SRi hatch)
Dimensions
4.36m x 1.97m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Proton Persona/Wira

from NOV 1993

Owners' verdicts

Good brakes, clutch, driving seat adjustment, ease of parking, rear headroom, boot space (hatchback), ease of loading (hatchback), ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), rear view
Poor position of switches and controls

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

Supermini Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.1, 1.2, 1.4 or 1.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £6,700
Dimensions
3.71m x 1.85m inc mirrors

Renault Clio

from MARCH 1991 to MAY 1998

Owners' verdicts

Good boot space
Poor steering, brakes, clutch, overall performance (petrol), driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front/rear headroom, getting in and out, ride quality on corners, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, changing tyre, fuel consumption (petrol), insurance costs
Very poor cost of replacement parts and servicing (petrol), engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	○
Faults		●	○

Recent exhaust or emission control system (petrol), steering
Older washers/wipers

Supermini

WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.2, 1.4, 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£7,370 (1.2 3-dr) to £15,315 (2.0 Sport)
Dimensions
3.77m x 1.93m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Renault Clio

from MAY 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good steering, removing rear seats, engine noise (petrol)
Good stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front legroom, internal storage space, boot space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front/rear view, wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, overall performance (petrol)
Poor cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs (petrol)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	★	○	

Newest none
Recent none

MPV Used only

Body styles
MPV with 5 or 7 seats
Engines
2.0, 2.2 or 2.9 litre petrol, 2.1 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £11,100
Dimensions
4.40m x 1.80m

Renault Espace

from JULY 1985 to MARCH 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of parking
Poor overall performance, driving position, shoulder room in middle row, headlights
Very poor clutch, gear change, ventilation, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○
Problems			●
Faults			●

Older exhaust or emission control system, non-engine electrics, cooling system, heating/ventilation

MPV

Body styles
MPV with 5 or 7 seats
Engines
2.0 or 3.0 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new
£19,170 (2.0 Authentique) to £30,420 (3.0 Initiale)
Dimensions
4.52m x 2.07m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Renault Espace

from OCT 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good internal storage space, fuel consumption
Good instrument visibility, ease of loading, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, ventilation, styling, interior design
Poor legroom in middle row, shoulder room in middle row

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	●		
Faults	●		

Newest none

Family Used only

Body styles
5-dr hatchback and 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 3.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.2 litre dsl
Prices used
around £3,100 to £8,900
Dimensions
4.51m x 2.04m inc mirrors

Renault Laguna

from APRIL 1994 to DEC 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good boot space (hatchback), ease of loading, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good rear legroom, boot space (estate), ease of loading (estate)
Poor steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance (petrol), instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ride quality on corners, noise, front view, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, quality of trim/fittings, rattles/squeaks, fuel consumption (petrol), cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs (petrol), driving seat adjustment
Very poor engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	●	●
Problems	○	●	○
Faults	●	●	○

Diesel

newest	recent	older
	○	
	○	
	●	

Newest heating/ventilation, braking system
Recent engine components (dsl), fuel system (ptl), exhaust or emission control system (ptl), non-engine electrics, cooling system, heating/ventilation, braking
Older exhaust or emission control system

Small

Body styles
5-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon, 2-dr coupé, 2-dr cabriolet
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£10,120 (1.4 Authentique) to £18,620 (2.0 Privilege)
Dimensions
4.03m x 1.97m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Renault Mégane

from APRIL 1996

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, boot space, ease of loading (saloon), engine noise, noise, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Poor clutch, gear change, front/rear headroom, rear legroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, rear view, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Very poor instrument visibility, position of switches and controls

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	●	●	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none
Recent exhaust or emission control system, washers/wipers

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Small MPV

Body styles
small MPV with 5 seats
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£12,235 (1.4 Authentique) to £17,520 (2.0 Privilege Monaco)
Dimensions
4.13m x 1.99m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Renault Scénic

from MAY 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, rear headroom, getting in and out, storage space, boot space, ease of loading, removing rear seats, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, brakes, driver's seat support, driving position, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, rear shoulder room, folding rear seats, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front/rear view, wipers, ventilation, styling, interior design, changing tyre, insurance
Poor stability at speed, gear change, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ride quality on corners, heating, heating adjustment, air conditioning, engine noise (diesel), fuel consumption (petrol)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	Diesel: newest	Diesel: recent	Diesel: older
Breakdowns	●	○		○	○	
Problems	○	○		○	○	
Faults	○	○		○	○	

Newest none
Recent fuel system (petrol), washers/wipers

Supermini Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.1 or 1.4 litre petrol, 1.4 or 1.5 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £4,500
Dimensions
3.53m x 1.78m inc mirrors

Rover 100/Metro

from MAY 1990 to OCT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts
Poor stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, internal storage, boot space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, fuel consumption
Very poor steering, rear leg-/head-/shoulder room, getting in and out, air conditioning, styling, interior design, quality of trim/fittings, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	★
Faults		○	★

Recent central locking
Older central locking, rust

Small

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.1, 1.4, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£7,850 (1.1i) to £13,815 (1.8 GTi)
Dimensions
3.99m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Rover 200/25

from NOV 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, instrument visibility, ease of parking, styling, interior design, changing tyre, cost of replacement parts (petrol), insurance costs
Poor clutch, gear change, overall performance (petrol), driving position, front legroom, front headroom, rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space, ease of loading, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, air conditioning, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	Diesel: newest	Diesel: recent	Diesel: older
Breakdowns	○	●			○	
Problems	○	○			○	
Faults	○	○			●	

Newest none
Recent main engine components (petrol), cylinder head/cylinder head gasket, exhaust or emission control system (petrol), washers/wipers, cooling system (petrol)

Small

Body styles
5-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£9,815 (1.4 iE hatch) to £16,915 (2.0 saloon)
Dimensions
4.32m x 1.92m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Rover 400/45

from MAY 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)

Good boot space (hatchback), boot space (saloon), ride quality on straight, interior design, changing tyre

Poor clutch, gear change, overall performance (petrol), drivers seat support, driving seat adjustment, ease of driving, ease of parking, front/rear headroom, internal storage space, rear view, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, fuel consumption (petrol), servicing costs (petrol), insurance costs

Very poor engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	●	○
Problems	●	●	○
Faults	○	○	○

Diesel

newest	recent	older
	○	
	○	
	○	

Newest suspension

Recent cylinder head/cylinder head gasket (petrol), engine electrics (petrol), lights/light units, non-engine electrics, cooling system (petrol), braking system, steering

Older cooling system (petrol)

Family

WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.8, 2.0 to 2.5 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£16,315 (1.8) to £25,635 (2.5 SE estate)
Dimensions
4.75m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Rover 75

from FEB 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good gear change, engine noise, noise, ventilation, styling, interior design, servicing costs, insurance costs

Good stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, overall driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, rear shoulder room, ride quality, seat comfort, windscreen wipers, head lights, heating, heating adjustment, air conditioning, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Family | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon
Engines
1.8, 2.0 or 2.3 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used
around £3,000 to £10,000
Dimensions
4.65m x 1.90m inc mirrors

Rover 600

from APRIL 1993 to OCT 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel), cost of replacement parts (diesel), servicing costs (diesel)

Good gear change, interior design, ease of DIY, changing tyre, cost of replacement parts (petrol)

Poor driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, position of switches and controls, ease of parking, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, ride quality on corners, front view, headlights, heating, air conditioning, fuel consumption (petrol), rear view, ventilation, stability at speed

Very poor rear legroom, removing rear seats, engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	●	○	○

Newest non-engine electrics

Recent electric windows

Older electric windows

Executive | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch, 2-dr coupé
Engines
2.0, 2.5 or 2.7 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £10,800
Dimensions
4.88m x 1.96m inc mirrors

Rover 800

from JULY 1986 to OCT 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts

Good boot space (saloon)

Poor stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in/out, internal storage space, ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality on corners, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, servicing costs

Very poor ease of parking, engine noise, noise, rear view, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		●	○
Problems		○	●
Faults		●	●

Recent main engine components, exhaust or emission control system, braking system, steering

Older exhaust or emission control system, non-engine electrics, heating/ventilation, braking system, interior equipment

Family

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 2-dr convertible
Engines
2.0, 2.3 or 2.5 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new
£17,115 (2.0t Eco) to £31,815 (2.0 Aero conv)
Dimensions
4.63m x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Saab 9-3/900

from OCT 1993

Owners' verdicts

Good driving seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, front headroom, boot space, ease of loading, seat comfort, engine noise, headlights, heating, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Poor steering, ease of driving, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on corners, changing tyre, cost of replacement parts

Very poor ease of parking, rear legroom, rear view, fuel consumption, servicing costs, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	★	○	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	○	○

Newest heating/ventilation
Recent heating/ventilation
Older none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Executive

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0, 2.3 or 3.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£19,815 (2.0t) to £31,315 (3.0 Griffin estate auto)
Dimensions
4.81m x 2.04m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Saab 9-5

from JUNE 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good boot space (saloon)

Good stability at speed, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front/rear headroom, ease of loading (saloon), ease of folding rear seats (estate), ride quality on straight, seat comfort, windscreen wipers, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, servicing costs, insurance costs, fuel consumption

Poor internal storage space

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none
Recent heating/ventilation

Executive Used only

Body styles
5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines
2.0, 2.3 or 3.0 litre petrol
Prices used
around £4,000 to £12,100
Dimensions
4.85m x 1.75m

Saab 9000CS/CD

from OCT 1985 to OCT 1998

Owners' verdicts

Good driver's seat support, driving position, front/rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, boot space (hatchback), ease of loading (hatchback), seat comfort, quality of trim and fittings

Poor steering, brakes, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of parking, ride quality on corners, engine noise, noise, windscreen wipers, styling, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Very poor rear view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		●	○
Problems		○	○
Faults		○	○

Recent none
Older heating/ventilation

MPV

Body styles
MPV with 5 or 7 seats
Engines
1.8, 2.0 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£18,015 (1.8 TS) to £24,215 (2.8 Sport)
Dimensions
4.63m x 2.15m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Seat Alhambra

from JUNE 1996

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing/insurance costs

Good brakes, clutch, gear change, front headroom, rear legroom, legroom in middle row, headroom in middle row, getting in and out, ease of folding rear seats

Poor front view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Seats overall are good for reliability

Supermini

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.0, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre dsl
Prices new
£7,815 (1.4 S 3-dr) to £17,810 (1.8T 3-dr)
Dimensions
3.85m x 1.81m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Seat Ibiza

from OCT 1993

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom

Good steering, stability at speed, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre

Poor rear view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none

Recent none

Supermini

BEST BUY

Body styles
5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.0, 1.4 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£7,520 (1.4 Classic) to £12,620 (1.9 Tdi Elegance est)
Dimensions
3.96m x 1.83m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Skoda Fabia

from MARCH 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, driving pleasure, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, storage space, boot space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Good ease of driving, mirrors

Poor rear view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Small

Body styles
5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.3 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£5,820 (1.3 Popular) to £8,320 (1.9 D Classic)
Dimensions
3.86m x 1.90m inc mirrors
Running costs
very low

Skoda Felicia

from MAY 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear view, ease of DIY, changing tyre, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Good instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, front/rear headroom, rear legroom, rear shoulder room, getting in/out, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), removing rear seats, noise, mirrors, front view, heating, heating adjustment, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption

Poor stability at speed, ease of driving, ease of loading (estate), ride quality on corners, styling, interior design

Very poor steering

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none

Recent interior equipment

Family

Body styles
5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£9,620 (1.4 Classic) to £17,420 (1.8T Laurin & Klement estate)
Dimensions
4.51m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Skoda Octavia

from MAY 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good clutch, fuel consumption (diesel), insurance costs

Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, rear headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), ride quality, noise, mirrors, front view, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption

Poor rear legroom

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Diesel	newest	recent	older
	○		
	●		
	●		

Newest non-engine electrics, interior equipment

Family/off-roader

WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
5-dr estate
Engines
2.0 litre petrol
Prices new
£15,315 (2.0) to £22,765 (2.0 S Turbo)
Dimensions
4.46m x 1.74m
Running costs
high

Subaru Forester

from SEPT 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, noise, windscreen wipers, headlights, quality of trim and fittings

Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, gear change, overall performance, driving seat adjustment, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front headroom, rear shoulder room, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, changing tyre, rattles and squeaks

Poor styling

Very poor fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Small | Used only

Body styles
2-dr or 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6 , 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol
Prices used
around £3,200 to £17,400
Dimensions
4.35m x 1.90m inc mirrors

Subaru Impreza

from MAY 1993 to SEPT 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good overall performance, driving pleasure, boot space (estate), ride quality on corners

Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, gear change, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, ease of driving, ease of parking, front legroom, front headroom, getting in and out, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, heating, rattles and squeaks

Poor boot space (saloon), servicing costs

Very poor interior design, ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none

Recent none

Family | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0, 2.2 or 2.5 litre petrol
Prices used
around £3,000 to £16,000
Dimensions
4.60m x 1.70m

Subaru Legacy

from APRIL 1994 to DEC 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, rear view

Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, driving seat adjustment, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of loading (estate), ride quality, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating adjustment, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre

Very poor fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing/insurance costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

Supermini

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.0 or 1.3 litre petrol
Prices new
£6,720 (1.0)
Dimensions
3.85m x 1.59m
Running costs
average

Suzuki Swift

from APRIL 1989

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, rear shoulder room

Good steering, ease of parking, rear headroom, ease of folding rear seats, fuel consumption

Poor instrument visibility, styling, interior design

Very poor position of switches and controls, ride quality on straight, noise, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Suzukis overall are good for reliability

Off-roader | Used only

Body styles
3-dr/5-dr estate, 2-dr/3-dr soft top
Engines
1.6, 2.0 or 2.5 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £10,400
Dimensions
4.04m x 1.63m
Running costs
low

Suzuki Vitara

from OCT 1988 to JUNE 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of parking
Good getting in and out
Poor overall performance, driver's seat comfort, driving seat adjustment, driving position, driving pleasure, front legroom, rear headroom, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, rear view, headlights, ventilation, styling, quality of trim and fittings
Very poor stability at speed, rear legroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, boot space, ride quality on straight, interior design

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Suzukis overall are good for reliability

Supermini

Body styles
5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.0, 1.2 or 1.3 litre petrol
Prices new
£7,815 (1.3 GL) to £8,690 (1.3 GL auto)
Dimensions
3.41m x 1.62m
Running costs
average

Suzuki Wagon R+

from OCT 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good steering, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, rear view, rattles and squeaks
Good brakes, overall performance, seat comfort, engine noise, front view, headlights, heating, fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Suzukis overall are good for reliability

Family

WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£12,815 (1.6 saloon) to £20,255 (2.0 CDX estate)
Dimensions
4.52m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Toyota Avensis

from NOV 1997

Owners' verdicts

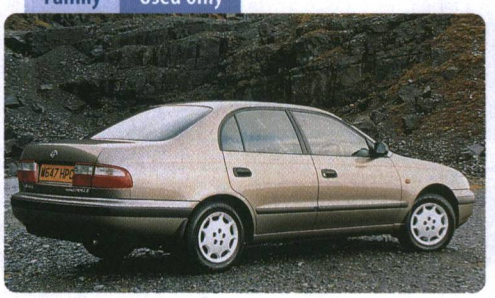
Very good storage space, engine noise, DIY, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Good steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, performance, driver's seat support, driving position, ease of driving, rear legroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, boot space, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ease of loading (saloon), removing rear seats, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, headlights, heating, ventilation, quality of trim/fittings, rattles/squeaks, changing tyre, servicing costs
Poor ease of parking, front headroom
Very poor rear view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	★	★	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest breaking system
Recent steering

Family | Used only



Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used
around £2,600 to £6,000
Dimensions
4.53m x 1.89m inc mirrors

Toyota Carina E

from MAY 1992 to NOV 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, boot space (saloon)
Good instrument visibility, front legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ease of loading (saloon), rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, changing tyre, fuel consumption
Poor stability at speed, gear change, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality, engine noise, noise, windscreen wipers, styling, interior design, cost of replacement parts
Very poor rear view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		★	★
Problems		○	★
Faults		○	★

Recent none
Older none

Coupé | Used only

Body styles
3-dr coupé,
2-dr convertible
Engines
1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol
Prices used
around £6,000 to £17,000
Dimensions
4.42m x 1.75m

Toyota Celica

from MARCH 1994 to OCT 1999

Owners' verdicts

Poor rear headroom

All other aspects were rated as average.

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	
Problems		○	
Faults		○	

Recent none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback,
5-dr estate, 4-dr saloon
Engines
1.3, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol,
2.0 litre diesel
Prices used
around £2,700 to £6,800
Dimensions
4.27m x 1.87m inc mirrors

Toyota Corolla

from AUG 1992 to MAY 1997

Owners' verdicts

Good steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, boot space (hatchback), headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, changing tyre

Poor getting in and out, insurance costs

Very poor cost of replacement parts

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	★
Problems		★	★
Faults		★	★

Recent none
Older none

Small | BEST BUY

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback,
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.3, 1.4 or 1.6 petrol,
1.9 or 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£8,815 (1.4S 3-dr) to
£15,095 (2.0 5-dr est)
Dimensions
4.29m x 1.87m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Toyota Corolla

from JUNE 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good engine noise, noise, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY

Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driving seat adjustment, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, quality of trim and fittings, changing tyre, fuel consumption

Poor rear legroom, rear headroom

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	★	★	
Problems	★	★	
Faults	★	★	

Newest none
Recent none

MPV | WORTH CONSIDERING

Body styles
MPV with 6 seats
Engines
2.0 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new
£15,815 (2.0 GS 7st) to
£18,020 (2.2 TD 6st auto)
Dimensions
4.53m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Toyota Picnic

from JAN 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good ease of parking, engine noise, windscreen wipers, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption, servicing costs, insurance costs

Good steering, brakes, overall performance, instrument visibility, ease of driving, ride quality on straight, noise, mirrors, front view, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, driving pleasure

Poor ease of loading

Very poor boot space

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Toyotas overall are very good for reliability

MPV | Used only

Body styles
MPV with 7 or 8 seats
Engines
2.4 litre petrol
Prices used
around £5,700 to £18,500
Dimensions
4.75m x 2.09m inc mirrors

Toyota Previa

from SEPT 1990 to JULY 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, internal storage space, boot space
Good rear headroom, rear shoulder room, legroom in middle row, headroom in middle row, shoulder room in middle row, ease of loading, quality of trim and fittings
Poor overall performance, seat belt comfort, getting in and out, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on corners, insurance costs
Very poor stability at speed, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts/servicing

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			★
Problems			○
Faults			○

Older none

Off-roader | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr estate, 3-dr soft top
Engines
2.0 litre petrol
Prices used
around £5,800 to £14,000
Dimensions
3.81m x 1.74m

Toyota RAV4

from JUNE 1994 to AUG 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good servicing costs
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, getting in and out, ride quality on straight, engine noise, front view, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, air conditioning, styling, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, insurance costs
Poor rear headroom, rear shoulder room, ease of loading, seat comfort
Very poor rear legroom, internal storage space, boot space

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	★	★	
Faults	○	★	

Newest none
Recent none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Supermini | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.3 litre petrol
Prices used
around £2,200 to £6,800
Dimensions
3.74m x 1.83m inc mirrors

Toyota Starlet

from MARCH 1996 to JULY 1999

Owners' verdicts

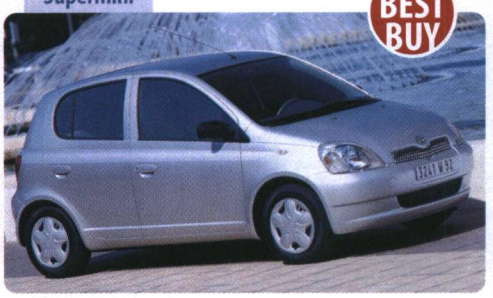
Very good windscreen wipers, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks
Good steering, brakes, clutch, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches/controls, ease of parking, mirrors, front view, rear view, headlights, heating, heating adjustment
Very poor rear legroom

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		★	
Problems		★	
Faults		★	

Recent none

Supermini



Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.0, 1.3 or 1.5 litre petrol
Prices new
£6,870 (1.0S VVT-i) to £11,850 (1.5T Sport VVT-i)
Dimensions
3.61m x 1.88m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Toyota Yaris

from MARCH 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good steering, brakes, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, driving pleasure, front/rear headroom, rear leg/shoulder room, getting in/out, storage, removing rear seats, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, wipers, lights, ventilation, styling/interior design, trim/fittings, rattles/squeaks, changing tyre, fuel consumption, servicing/insurance costs
Good stability at speed, clutch, gear change, performance, driving seat adjustment, ease of driving and parking, front legroom, loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on straight, mirrors, front view, heating, air conditioning, ease of DIY
Poor rear view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	★		
Problems	★		
Faults	★		

Newest braking system

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatch, 4-dr sal, 5-dr est, 2-dr conv
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.7 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £8,300
Dimensions
4.06m x 1.86m inc mirrors

Vauxhall Astra

from OCT 1991 to AUG 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts (diesel)
Good boot space (hatchback), servicing costs (petrol), fuel consumption (diesel)
Poor steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, performance, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, lights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, trim/fittings, rattles/squeaks, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	
Problems	●	●	
Faults	●	●	

Diesel

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		●	●
Problems		●	○
Faults		●	●

Recent main engine components (petrol), exhaust or emission control system (petrol), engine electrics, non-engine electrics, braking system, exterior
Older engine components (petrol), exhaust or emission control system (petrol), engine electrics (diesel), non-engine electrics, cooling system, gears/clutch, brakes

Small

Body styles
3-dr/5-dr hatch, 4-dr sal, 5-dr est, 2-dr coupé/conv
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.2 litre petrol, 1.7 or 2.0 dsl
Prices new
£10,115 (1.6i Expression) to £18,815 (2.0 coupé)
Dimensions
4.11m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Vauxhall Astra

from FEB 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts
Good steering, stability at speed, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, front/rear headroom, boot space (hatchback), ride quality, engine noise (petrol), noise, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre, servicing costs, insurance costs, fuel consumption (diesel), cost of replacement parts (diesel)
Poor front view, rear view
Very poor engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	●	
Faults	○	○	

Diesel

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	●	○	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Newest non-engine electrics, lights/light units
Recent lights/light units

Supermini | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines
1.0, 1.2, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.5 or 1.7 litre dsl
Prices used
around £2,200 to £8,400
Dimensions
3.73m x 1.76m inc mirrors

Vauxhall Corsa

from APRIL 1993 to OCT 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)
Good changing tyre, cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs (diesel
Poor steering, stability at speed, clutch, gear change, performance (petrol), driver's seat support, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in/out, storage space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), mirrors, front view, wipers, lights, styling, interior design, quality of trim/fittings, rattles/squeaks, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	○	○

Diesel

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			○
Problems			○
Faults			○

Newest cooling system
Recent exhaust or emission control system
Older engine electrics (diesel), dashboard switches/control stalks, lights/light units

Off-roader

Body styles
3-dr/5-dr est, 3-dr soft top
Engines
2.0, 2.2, 2.4 or 3.2 litre petrol, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 or 2.8 litre dsl
Prices new
£15,315 (2.2 Sport est) to £21,815 (3.2 Ltd est)
Dimensions
4.27m x 2.03m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Vauxhall Frontera

from OCT 1991

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Poor stability at speed, overall performance, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ease of loading, mirrors, quality of trim and fittings
Very poor getting in and out, noise, rear view, interior design, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Vauxhalls overall are poor for reliability

Executive

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0 to 3.2 litre petrol, 2.0, 2.2 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new
£18,015 (2.6 GLS 4-dr) to £30,515 (3.2 Elite 5-dr est)
Dimensions
4.78m x 1.97m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

Vauxhall Omega

from APRIL 1994

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Good rear legroom, boot space (saloon)
Poor steering, stability at speed, brakes, gear change, performance, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, getting in/out, storage space, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, front view, rear view, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption
Very poor headlights, quality of trim and fittings

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	●	●	○
Problems	●	●	●
Faults	●	●	●

Newest engine electrics
Recent fuel system, ignition system, non-engine electrics, interior equipment
Older main engine components, fuel system, non-engine electrics, braking system

Coupé Used only

Body styles
3-dr coupé
Engines
1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol
Prices used
around £4,400 to £10,500
Dimensions
3.92m x 1.81m inc mirrors

Vauxhall Tigra

from NOV 1994 to JUNE 2001

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption
Good ease of parking
Poor clutch, gear change, overall performance, driving pleasure, front legroom, ride quality on corners, interior design
Very poor stability at speed, brakes, seat belt comfort, front/rear headroom, rear legroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, quality of trim and fittings, seat comfort, ventilation

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns			
Problems			
Faults			

Too few members reporting, but Vauxhalls overall are poor for reliability

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6 to 2.6 litre petrol, 1.7, 2.0 or 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new
£13,070 (1.6 4-dr) to £20,615 (2.2 Dti 5-dr est)
Dimensions
4.47m x 1.85m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Vauxhall Vectra

from OCT 1995

Owners' verdicts

Very good cost of replacement parts, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good boot space (saloon), servicing costs (petrol)
Poor steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch/gears, performance, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, position of switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front/rear legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in/out, storage, loading, ease of folding rear seats, boot space (estate), ride quality, seat comfort, noise, front/rear view, wipers, headlights, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, int. design, trim/fittings, rattles/squeaks, DIY, changing tyre, fuel consumption (petrol) **Very poor** mirrors, engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	●	●	
Faults	●	●	

Diesel

newest	recent	older
	●	
	●	
	●	

Newest fuel system, exhaust or emission control system, steering
Recent cam belt/timing belt, fuel system, exhaust or emission control system (petrol), engine electrics, dashboard switches/control stalks, non-engine electrics, steering, exterior

Small MPV

Body styles
small MPV with 7 seats
Engines
1.6, 1.8 or 2.2 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new
£13,815 (1.6 Club) to £17,315 (2.2i Comfort)
Dimensions
4.32m x 2.00m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

Vauxhall Zafira

from MAY 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage space, removing rear seats, noise, rear view, servicing costs
Good steering, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, getting in and out, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, engine noise, mirrors, headlights, ventilation, rattles and squeaks, insurance costs
Poor front view

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	●		

Newest Non-engine electrics

Family | Used only

Body styles
5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines
1.6, 1.7, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £3,700
Dimensions
4.32m x 1.89m inc mirrors

Volvo 440/460

from DEC 1988 to JUNE 1997

Owners' verdicts

Good driver's seat support, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), boot space (saloon), seat comfort, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, insurance costs

Poor overall performance, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, front headroom, getting in and out, boot space (hatchback), engine noise, noise, styling, rattles and squeaks, interior design

Very poor gear change, ease of loading (hatchback), cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	○
Faults		○	●

Recent none
Older none

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Executive | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0 or 2.3 litre petrol, 2.4 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £11,500
Dimensions
4.88m x 1.99m inc mirrors

Volvo 940

from SEPT 1990 to DEC 1997

Owners' verdicts

Good ease of parking, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (estate), ease of loading (estate), ease of folding rear seats (estate), rear view

Poor stability at speed, clutch, gear change, overall performance, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, engine noise, noise, air conditioning, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, servicing costs

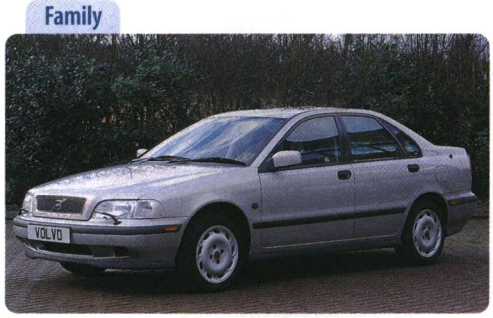
Very poor styling, interior design, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	○
Faults		○	○

Recent none
Older heating/ventilation

Family



Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8, 1.9 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£14,315 (S40 1.6 S 4-dr) to £20,965 (V40 2.0 T4 SE 5-dr est)
Dimensions
4.48m x 1.90m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

Volvo S40/V40

from MARCH 1996

Owners' verdicts

Good brakes, driver's seat support, driving position, seat belt comfort, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, heating adjustment, ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim/fittings, rattles and squeaks, insurance costs

Poor instrument visibility, front headroom, boot space (estate), ride quality on straight, fuel consumption

Very poor ease of loading (estate), cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	
Problems	○	★	
Faults	○	○	

Newest lights/light unit
Recent lights/light unit

Executive | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
2.0, 2.3, 2.4 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
around £4,200 to £21,300
Dimensions
4.72m x 2.03m inc mirrors

Volvo S70/V70/850

from JUNE 1992 to SEPT 2000

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)

Good driver's seat support, front/rear headroom, internal storage space, ease of folding rear seats (saloon and estate), removing rear seats, rear view, insurance costs

Poor instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, driving pleasure, ride quality, engine noise (petrol), noise, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption (petrol), cost of replacement parts (petrol)

Very poor engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	●	○	○
Faults	●	●	○

Newest none
Recent battery, lights/light units
Older Nnon-engine electrics

Executive

Body styles
5-dr estate
Engines
2.0, 2.3, 2.4 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new
£20,320 (2.4 Torslander) to £28,780 (2.3SE)
Dimensions
4.72m x 2.03m inc mirrors
Running costs
very low

Volvo V70

from JAN 2000

Owners' verdicts

Good brakes, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, rear headroom, internal storage space, seat comfort, engine noise, noise, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, heating adjustment, ventilation, rattles and squeaks

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	★		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Small

Body styles
4-dr saloon
Engines
1.6, 2.0, 2.3 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£12,870 (1.6 S) to £20,120 (2.8 V6)
Dimensions
4.38m x 2.02m inc mirrors
Running costs
very high

VW Bora

from FEB 1999

Owners' verdicts

Very good clutch, driver's seat support, position of switches and controls, engine noise, noise, interior design, quality of trim and fittings
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, gear change, overall performance, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space, ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, heating adjustment, styling, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○		
Problems	○		
Faults	○		

Newest none

Small | Used only

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr cabriolet
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used
around £3,000 to £11,000
Dimensions
4.02m x 1.89m inc mirrors

VW Golf/Vento

from FEB 1992 to FEB 1998

Owners' verdicts

Very good fuel consumption (diesel)
Good stability at speed, gear change, position of switches and controls, ease of parking, boot space (saloon), ease of loading (estate), quality of trim and fittings, ease of DIY
Poor steering, brakes, clutch, rear legroom, boot space (hatchback), ease of loading (hatchback), noise, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, insurance costs, fuel consumption (petrol) servicing costs (diesel)
Very poor engine noise (diesel), cost of replacement parts, servicing costs (petrol)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		★	★
Faults		○	○

Diesel	newest	recent	older
		○	○
		○	○
		○	○

Recent none
Older gears/clutch, exterior

Small

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate, 2-dr cabriolet
Engines
1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.3 or 2.8 litre ptl, 1.9 litre dsl
Prices new
£10,570 (1.4 E) to £20,610 (2.0 cab 2-dr)
Dimensions
4.15m x 2.01m inc mirrors
Running costs
high

VW Golf

from NOV 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good quality of trim and fittings, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gears, performance, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front leg and head room, getting in/out, storage space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front/rear view, wipers, lights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, rattles/squeaks, changing tyre
Poor rear legroom, servicing costs (petrol), insurance costs, fuel consumption (ptl)
Very poor cost of replacement parts, servicing costs (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	
Problems	○	○	
Faults	○	○	

Diesel	newest	recent	older
	○	○	
	○	○	
	○	○	

Newest none
Recent interior equipment

Family | Used only

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.3 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.6, 1.9 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used
up to around £7,000
Dimensions
4.68m x 1.96m inc mirrors

VW Passat

from APRIL 1988 to APRIL 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear legroom, rear headroom, rear shoulder room, fuel consumption (dsl)
Good ease of parking, front legroom, front headroom, getting in and out, boot space (estate), ease of loading (estate), rear view, quality of trim and fittings
Poor steering, driving seat adjustment, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, noise, windscreen wipers, air conditioning, styling, overall performance (diesel), heating adjustment, headlights
Very poor brakes, ventilation, interior design, cost of replacement parts, engine noise (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns		○	○
Problems		○	●
Faults		●	○

Recent heating/ventilation
Older electric windows

Key	
★	better than average
○	average
●	worse than average
newest	1999-2001
recent	1996-1998
older	1993-1995

Family

Body styles
4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.8, 2.0, 2.3 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.5 litre dsl
Prices new
£14,315 (2.0 S 4-dr) to £22,510 (2.8 4Motion 5-dr est)
Dimensions
4.68m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

VW Passat

from FEB 1997

Owners' verdicts

Very good rear leg/head/shoulder room, boot space (saloon), fuel consumption (dsl)
Good stability, brakes, clutch/gears, performance, driver's seat, instruments, switches/controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front leg and head room, getting in/out, storage, loading, boot space (estate), ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, rear view, wipers, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, quality of trim and fittings, rattles and squeaks, engine noise (petrol)
Poor ease of folding rear seats (estate), cost of replacement parts (petrol), insurance costs, engine noise (diesel), fuel consumption (petrol), servicing costs (dsl)
Very poor cost of replacement parts (diesel)

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older	newest	recent	older
				Diesel		
Breakdowns	●	★		○	○	
Problems	●	●		●	●	
Faults	○	○		●	●	

Newest central locking
Recent central locking, heating/ventilation, steering, handles/locks

Supermini

Body styles
3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines
1.0, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.4 or 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£7,870 (1.0 E) to £14,535 (1.9 SE TDI)
Dimensions
3.74m x 1.83m inc mirrors
Running costs
low

VW Polo

from SEPT 1994

Owners' verdicts

Very good quality of trim and fittings
Good steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, performance (petrol), driver's seat, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, front/rear headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in/out, storage space, boot space, removing rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, engine noise (petrol), noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, heating, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks, changing tyre, fuel consumption (diesel)
Poor ease of loading, rear view, fuel consumption (petrol), insurance costs
Very poor cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	★	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	★	○

Newest none
Recent paintwork chipped/lifted/peeled/blistered
Older none

MPV

Body styles
MPV with 5, 6 or 7 seats
Engines
1.8, 2.0 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new
£18,215 (2.0 S) to £26,525 (2.8 Carat)
Dimensions
4.62m x 2.15m inc mirrors
Running costs
average

VW Sharan

from AUG 1995

Owners' verdicts

Good clutch, gear change, fuel consumption
Poor rear headroom, internal storage space, removing middle/rear seats, front view, windscreen wipers
Very poor boot space

Reliability and troublespots

	newest	recent	older
Breakdowns	○	●	
Problems	○	●	
Faults	○	○	

Newest none
Recent none

contacts

MANUFACTURERS

Alfa Romeo
0800 718 000
www.alfaromeo.co.uk

Audi
0800 699 888
www.audi.co.uk

BMW
0800 325 600
www.bmw.co.uk

Chrysler/Jeep
0800 616 159
www.chryslerjeep.co.uk

Citroën
0870 606 9000
www.citroen.co.uk

Daewoo
0800 060 606
www.daewoo-cars.co.uk

Daihatsu
0121 520 5000
www.daihatsu.co.uk

Fiat
0800 717 000
www.fiat.co.uk

Ford
08457 111 888
www.ford.co.uk

Honda
0845 200 8000
www.honda.co.uk

Hyundai
01494 428 600
www.hyundai-car.co.uk

Jaguar
0800 70 80 60
www.jaguar.com

Lexus
0845 278 8888
www.lexus.co.uk

Mazda
0845 601 3147
www.mazda.co.uk

Mercedes-Benz
00800 1777 7777
www.mercedes-benz.co.uk

MG Rover
0121 482 3344 (to find local Rover dealer)
08457 186186 (Rover brochure line)
www.mg-rover.com
www.mgcars.co.uk

Mitsubishi
01285 655 777
www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk

Nissan
01923 899 334
www.nissan.co.uk

Perodua
020 8961 1255
www.perodua-uk.com

Peugeot
0845 200 1234
www.peugeot.co.uk

Proton
0800 052 1521
www.proton.co.uk

Renault
0800 52 51 50
www.renault.co.uk

Saab
0800 626 556
www.saab.co.uk

Seat
0500 222 222
www.seat.co.uk

Skoda
0845 774 5745
www.skoda.co.uk

Subaru
0121 557 2112
www.subaru.co.uk

Suzuki
01892 707007
www.suzuki.co.uk

Toyota
0845 275 5555
www.toyota.co.uk

Vauxhall
0845 600 1500
www.vauxhall.co.uk

Volvo
08457 564 636
www.volvocars.co.uk

VW
0800 711811
www.volkswagen.co.uk

BUYING NEW

The importers, brokers and supermarkets listed below are only a sample. Their listing here doesn't constitute our endorsement.

Importers

Carbusters 08700 133 733
www.carbusters.com

Carseekers 0870 702 7203
www.carseekers.co.uk

JamJar (Direct Line)
0870 120 0595
www.jamjar.com

OneSwoop 0845 650 3135 (queries)
www.oneswoop.com

Virgin 0845 270 2277
www.virgincars.com

Brokers

Autobytel 01908 399 800
www.autobytel.co.uk

JamJar (Direct Line)
0845 608 1133
www.jamjar.com

Any internet search engine will suggest many more sites

The Daily Telegraph's motoring website lists more:
www.honestjohn.co.uk
(see under 'Buying new')

Car supermarkets

Motorhouse 2000
01543 462300
www.motorhouse2000ltd.co.uk

Motorpoint 01332 347357
www.motorpoint.co.uk

Trade Sales of Slough
01753 773763
www.trade-sales.co.uk.

BUYING USED

Auctions

Society of Motor Auctions (part of the Retail Motor Industry Federation)
08457 585 350

The Daily Telegraph's motoring website also has information on regional auctions:
www.honestjohn.co.uk
(see under 'Buying used')

Online used-car price guides

www.parkers.co.uk
www.topgear.com
www.whatcar.co.uk

Internet classifieds

www.autoseek.co.uk
www.autotrader.co.uk
www.carseller.co.uk
www.ixm.co.uk/motor/ixm-motor-content.htm
www.fish4cars.co.uk

Brokers

Autobytel 01908 399800
www.autobytel.co.uk

Car supermarkets

Fords of Winsford
0845 607 3208
www.fow.co.uk

Motorhouse 2000
01543 462300
www.motorhouse2000ltd.co.uk

Motorpoint 01332 347357
www.motorpoint.co.uk

The Great Trade Centre
020 8969 5511
www.tradecentre.co.uk

History checks/ car inspections

AA 0800 234 999 (data check)
0800 085 3007 (inspections)
www.theaa.com

Automobile Buyers Services (ABS) 0800 3585855
www.abscarchek.co.uk

DVLA Vehicle Check Service
0906 185 8585 (49p/min)

HPI 01722 422422
www.hpicheck.com

RAC 0870 533 3660
www.rac.co.uk

What Car? History Check
0845 601 0804
www.whatcar.co.uk

Other contacts

Office of Fair Trading (for advice on buying second-hand)
www.oft.gov.uk/html/cars/home.htm

Vehicle Inspectorate MOT hotline (to check authenticity of a certificate)
0845 600 5977
www.via.gov.uk

RUNNING COSTS

Fuel consumption figures:
www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk
Tax bands:
www.dvla.gov.uk/vehicles/taxation.htm

RECALLS

SMMT 020 7235 7000
www.smmt.co.uk

VI 0117 954 3300
www.via.gov.uk

Other contacts

For *Glass*'s Information Services Vehicle Recall database:
www.virtual-showroom.co.uk
www.fleetnewsnet.co.uk/recall/recall_information
www.theaa.co.uk/motoringandtravel/carrecall

recalls

Has your car been recalled for important safety work? Check our list to find out

When car manufacturers discover safety-related problems with their cars, they recall them by notifying owners to take their car to a franchised garage to have the problem fixed, for free.

Last year, manufacturers recalled 1,377,300 cars because of potentially dangerous defects – a 30 per cent increase over the previous year. Industry experts reckon that the trend for more recalls is linked to the increasing complexity of cars' high-tech components. Makers are also more fearful about lawsuits being brought against them as a result of faults and defects, so they would rather play it safe and recall potential problems.

To ensure that as few cars as possible miss out on being fixed, car recalls are operated under a code of practice agreed between the car makers and the government's Vehicle Inspectorate (VI), which is part of the Department of Transport, Local Government and Regions (DTLR). When a manufacturer notifies VI of a safety defect in one of its models, it's given access to the DTLR's registration records. It can then contact owners direct to warn them about the problem, and to tell them what to do about it.

That said, many cars can still slip though the net, and up to 30 per cent of recalled cars are never returned to the maker for crucial safety checks. The AA estimates that manufacturers failed to contact up to 260,000 owners last year. A car could be missed, if, for example, the recall coincides with a change in ownership, and the new owner doesn't get to hear about it.

The list, right, shows major vehicle recalls of the past 12 months. You can also check whether your car has been recalled by contacting the maker or importer, or by calling the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders' Recall Information Point on 020 7235 7000. You can also ring VI's hotline on 0117 954 3300, or check its website at www.via.gov.uk.

MAKE AND MODEL	BUILD DATES	POSSIBLE PROBLEM
Audi A3	Jan 1999 to May 1999	Front seat buckle may open in crash
TT	Sept 1998 to Dec 1999	Handling and stability problems
BMW 3-, 5- and 7-series	Sept 1999 to Oct 1999	Defective rear brake light switch
Chrysler Voyager	1997 to 2000	Faulty parking brake
Citroën Xsara and Xsara Picasso	July 2000 to Sept 2000	Ball joint could come apart
Saxo, Xsara and Berlingo	Sept 1999 to Oct 1999	Loss of brake servo assistance
Xsara	Sept 1999 to Nov 1999	Passenger airbag could activate when switched off
Daewoo Matiz	not notified to VI	Possible fuel leakage from filter
Nexia and Espero	not notified to VI	Front seat buckles could come apart
Fiat Punto (new shape)	Aug 1999 to June 2000	Fuel vapour pipe could chafe or split
Seicento	Jul 1999 to Aug 1999	Brake pedal may fracture
Ford Focus	Feb 1999 to Mar 1999	Unexpected restraint system deployment
Focus	Mar 1998 to Mar 2000	Oil could drip on to hot exhaust shield
Focus (1.6)	Jan 1999 to Jan 2000	Engine may lose power suddenly
Focus (1.6 auto)	Aug 1999 to Feb 2000	Engine may cut out or stall
Maverick	1995 to 1997	Brake pipe may chafe on floorpan
Mondeo (non ABS)	Jan 1996 to Aug 1998	Brake fluid could leak from joint
Honda Civic 1.4 and 1.5	1999 to 2000	Rear wheels could lock under hard braking
Civic (5-door) and Aerodeck	Mar 1999 to Oct 1999	Rear suspension bolt could break
Jaguar S-type	May 2000 to July 2000	Faulty seat belt buckles
S-type	Jan 1999 to Sept 2000	Front suspension ball joint may fail
Jeep Cherokee	1998 to 1999	Airbags may deploy unexpectedly
Land Rover Discovery and Defender Td5	Sept 1998 to June 1999	Engine flywheel could disintegrate
Discovery Series II	July 1999 to Dec 1999	High pressure fluid leak is a fire risk
Discovery Series II	Aug 1998 to Apr 2000	Engine idler pulley may fracture
Mazda 626	May 1997 to Nov 1997	Engine may lose power suddenly
Mercedes-Benz E-class	2000	Heater booster switch may overheat
E-class	1994 to 1997	Power steering oil leak is a fire risk
M-class	1997 to Feb 2000	Faulty driver's seat belt buckle
Smart Car	1998 to 1999	Front suspension ball joint corrosion
Mitsubishi Colt	1996 to 1999	Crankshaft pulley could detach
Pinin	1999 to 2000	Engine may stop suddenly
Nissan Almera Tino	May 2000 to Sept 2000	Faulty side airbags/rear seat hinges
Terrano II	Jan 1995 to Mar 1997	Brake pipes may chafe on floorpan
Peugeot 106, 206, 306, 406 and Partner	not notified to VI	Faulty brake servo valve
206	not notified to VI	Unexpected deployment of side airbags
306 and Partner	not notified to VI	Front suspension may collapse
406	not notified to VI	Loose brake pedal assembly nuts
Range Rover V8 petrol	1994 to 1999	Leakage of engine coolant fluids
Renault Laguna, Mégane, Scénic, and Espace	Feb 2000 to Apr 2000	Faulty vacuum pumps in brakes
Laguna, Mégane and Scénic (diesel)	Dec 1998 to May 1999	Loss of brake servo assistance
Laguna, Safrane, Trafic, Kangoo and Extra	Jan 1999 to Nov 1999	Loss of brake servo assistance
Rover 825 diesel	Dec 1995 to Sept 1998	Engine may cut out while driving
Seat Alhambra	Mar 1996 to Sept 1999	Water contamination of brake fluid
Suzuki Swift 1.0 and 1.3 litre models	Aug 2000	} Steering rack, engine mounting, and suspension bolts can loosen
Wagon R+	June 2000 to Sept 2000	
Wagon R+	Jan 2000 to Aug 2000	Handbrake can slip off
Vitara V6 and diesel	June 1995 to Sept 1996	Front suspension studs may shear
Toyota Yaris	Jan 1999 to Jan 2000	Rear wheels could lock under hard braking
Vauxhall Astra	Aug 1991 to Feb 1999	Water contamination of brake fluid
Astra (3-door)	1998	Seat locking mechanism may fail
Zafira X20DTL diesel	2000	Fuel pipes may fracture
Volvo S80 and V70 (new shape)	1998 to 2000	Suspension ball joint may break
VW Sharan	Sept 1994 to Sept 1999	Water leakage into brake fluid through cap

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